

CHESS

BLUEPRINTS

PLANNING IN THE MIDDLEGAME

NIKOLAY YAKOVLEV



Nikolay Yakovlev

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Introduction

*Strategy requires thought;
tactics requires observation.* — Max Euwe

“Success in chess requires skill in handling a mass of heterogeneous forces,” said Ilia Shumov, one of the first European masters. Practice shows that we cannot simply handle those masses any way we like, but that we need to take into account the situation on the board.

Telling the difference between a weak player and a strong one, between a beginner and a master, is not as easy as we might think. Is the master stronger than the beginner only because he knows theory and can calculate more deeply and accurately? Obviously these factors play a role, but they are not critical. The main difference is that the beginner is looking for the best *move* in any position, while the master is looking for the best *plan*. The lack of a plan is a flaw shared by all beginners, and it deprives them of the opportunity to find the best continuation.

This flaw arises most likely because the young chessplayer’s development starts with the development of her tactical thinking, which is often focused on winning material and only rarely concerned with checkmating the enemy king. That’s why players often become slaves to material: they eagerly seek to

take pawns and pieces, and are very reluctant to part with them.

The material count dominates such players’ thoughts, putting positional considerations on the back burner. But a material advantage determines the outcome of the game only when all other factors are equal. In other words, material spells the difference when the position of the white and black pawns and pieces is approximately the same, neither side has weaknesses (or the weaknesses cancel each other out), and neither side has an edge in development.

Young players often manifest their poor understanding of the material balance by a contemptuous attitude towards the problem of exchanging. They might think that any trades of pawns or equal pieces will not affect a position’s assessment. But this is a big mistake. Trading a piece which protects the king greatly decreases the chances for successful defense. The exchange of a mere pawn might open the way for the enemy’s pieces into one’s camp. If one side is up a pawn, then trading off all the pieces might lead to a lost position. There are even certain opening variations which require a careful handling of all exchanges, as they can lead to

a hopeless ending; the Spanish Exchange Variation comes to mind as an example.

Figuratively speaking, the young chessplayer is akin to a boxer who feels comfortable in a close-in struggle, but makes serious and often irreversible mistakes fighting at longer range. If this player refuses to change his ways, he might turn into a pawn-grabber.

Strategy and Tactics

Speaking of plans, we can't avoid mentioning two important factors – namely, strategy and tactics. Chessplayers use those words habitually, often without reflecting on what they mean. Opening manuals and middlegame treatises give many and sundry definitions.

Rather than launching into a dry lecture, let me just say briefly that *strategy* maps out the main course of the game and defines the plan of battle, whereas *tactics* tells us how to carry out this plan. Strategy tells you *what* to achieve; tactics, *how* to achieve it.

Over time, as we build up our experience and knowledge, our play becomes increasingly purposeful and more coherent. Chess strategy has been studied for more than a century now. The rules discussed in this book weren't dreamed up by theoreticians: they were born in the heat of battle.

When Wilhelm Steinitz, the first world chess champion, devised his positional theory, he set forth the elements which determine the outcome of the game. He was the first to give the proper attention to factors such as weak, isolated and doubled pawns; the advantage of the bishop pair; pawn majorities on the flanks; and so on. Steinitz pointed out

that a position can be evaluated based on those factors when taken together with the dynamics of the position. Later grandmasters such as Siegbert Tarrasch and Emanuel Lasker further developed these ideas; many of their successors – particularly Richard Réti, Savielly Tartakover, and Aron Nimzowitsch – deepened them.

Lasker, the second world champion, remarked on the match in which he took the crown from Steinitz:

“The fact that Steinitz was defeated by me, and later by other masters, doesn't prove his theory wrong. It was, and remains, the cornerstone upon which everything rests....”

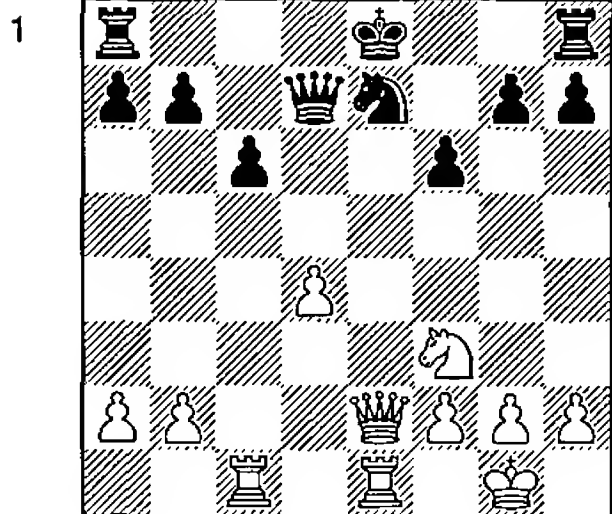
The kernel of Steinitz's theory was an idea that was not very obvious in his time: success on the chessboard is not a matter of luck, nor is it the province of genius capable of finding a winning combination under any circumstances – it is the result of a plan based on positional factors. Steinitz's system has stood the test of time, as it is scientific theory applied to the chessboard, reflecting the underlying logic of the game.

Consider the elements of positional evaluation according to Steinitz:

1. Edge in development
2. Mobility of the pieces
3. Control over the center
4. Position of the king
5. Weak squares
6. Pawn structure
7. Pawn majority on the queenside
8. Open files
9. Advantage of the bishop pair over a bishop and a knight or two knights

I want to illustrate the way Steinitz used his method in practice with the most

famous game of this chess genius (Steinitz—von Bardeleben, Hastings 1895):



17. d5! ...

A positional pawn sacrifice, enabling White to use the d4 square, which is crucial for the attack, while at the same time depriving Black's pieces of the important d5 square.

17... cxd5

18. ♖d4 ♙f7

19. ♖e6 ♜hc8

Else 20. ♜c7.

20. ♜g4! g6

21. ♖g5+! ♙e8

22. ♜xe7+!! ...

Steinitz starts the fireworks.

22... ♙f8!

The rook is inedible: 22... ♙xe7 (22... ♙xe7 23. ♜xc8+) 23. ♜e1+ ♙d8 (23... ♙d6 24. ♙b4+ ♙c7 25. ♖e6+ ♙b8 26. ♙f4+ +-) 24. ♖e6+ ♙e7 25. ♖c5+. The initial impression is that Black has outsmarted his opponent, whose pieces are stuck. However...

23. ♜f7+! ♙g8

24. ♜g7+! ...

A rare occurrence — a rabid piece in the middlegame. Like a tank, it flattens the enemy trenches. Steinitz had to foresee all this when he started his combination.

24... ♙h8

25. ♜h7+! ...

At this point Black decided he had seen enough. He gets checkmated in ten moves: 25... ♙g8 26. ♜g7+ ♙h8 (26... ♙f8 27. ♖h7+) 27. ♜h4+! ♙xg7 28. ♙h7+ ♙f8 29. ♜h8+ ♙e7 30. ♜g7+ ♙e8 31. ♜g8+ ♙e7 32. ♜f7+ ♙d8 33. ♜f8+ ♙e8 34. ♖f7+ ♙d7 35. ♜d6#.

The laws of strategy are applicable to everyone, grandmasters and amateurs alike. These laws give each game a general direction, helping to make the decision required by the circumstances.

But aimless play is still seen even today. A chessplayer might make one move, then a second one without a plan, then a third which contradicts both the first and the second. No wonder that such play leads quickly to disaster.

Naturally, no one is born knowing chess strategy; this comes as a result of improvement. There are certain tools we can use which might be useful when choosing a plan and considering a move. The inexperienced player has only a few of them, and it's the purpose of this book to increase their number and thus make your thinking more productive. One of the methods in this area is the study of typical positions and of the ways to play them.

Analyzing complex strategic positions can be made easier by using analogies. Studying the games of the masters, we go through many strategic positions and see typical technical and tactical ideas. The best of those ideas make a long-lasting impression, and we often try to copy those ideas when given the chance, making them our own. Thus, a significant amount of knowledge accu-

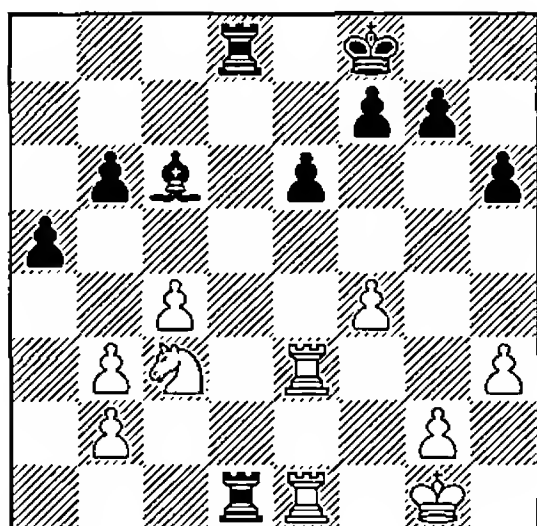
mulated over the years allows us to avoid re-inventing the wheel.

The chessplayer's strength is defined by his ability to foresee future events, to calculate possible variations further and more accurately. If it were possible to calculate every line to the very end, there would be no need to understand the principles of positional play. Unfortunately, our abilities as humans are limited.

Psychological research has shown that good chessplayers use the "tree of variations" approach (e.g., analyzing all possible moves) very rarely. More often they ask themselves whether they have seen this before, what was similar and what was different, what worked and what didn't. Thus, the chessplayer's strength depends directly on his chess erudition, which consists of all the strategic tools we have learned. For example, one of the factors that went into Mikhail Botvinnik's excellent play was his ability to draw parallels to previous games.

To illustrate Botvinnik's method, consider his comments from the game against the Polish master Kazimierz Plater in the 1947 Moscow tournament. He accompanied his 31st move with the following observation:

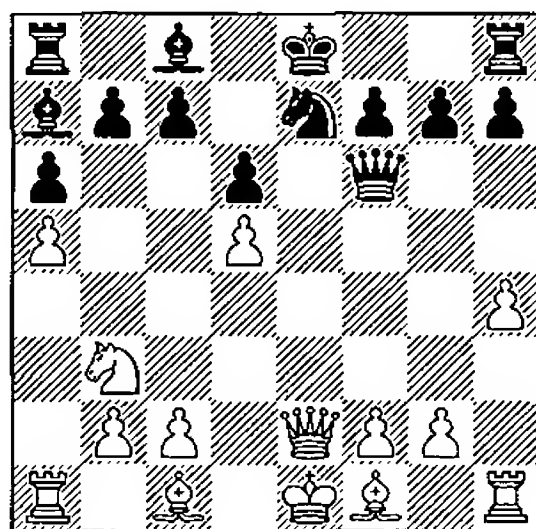
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"Black can now simplify the position. As soon as he improves the position of his king, he can trade a second rook as well. Rubinstein has proved the advantage of the bishop over the knight in analogous positions many times."

Another example:

3



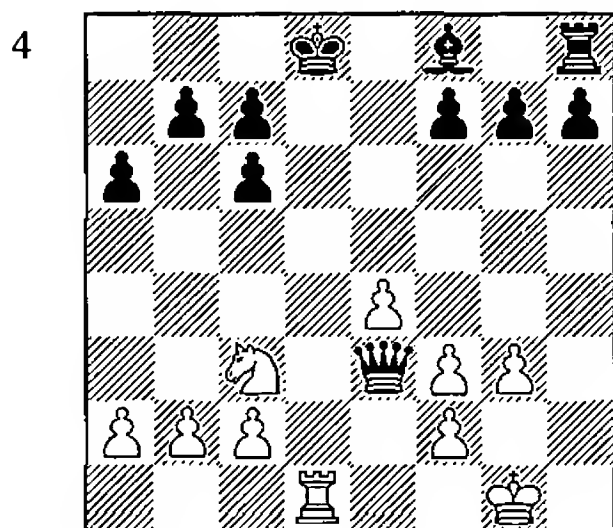
In the diagram position, an unexpected maneuver of the queen's rook drastically changed the course of the battle in **A. Norris—C.J. Nielsen** (Danish Junior Championship 1978):

13. ♖a4 h6 14. g4 ♔d8 15. ♜f4 ♚e5 16. ♚xe5 dxe5 17. ♜xf7 ♙xg4 18. ♜xg7 ♙f3 19. ♜h3 ♙e4 20. c4 ♘f5 21. ♜f7 ♘d4 22. ♘xd4 ♙xd4 23. ♜g3 ♙c5 24. ♙d2 ♙d6 25. ♙h3 ♜b8 26. ♙xh6 1-0.

I have to say that the rook lift 13. ♖a4 is not an original idea. It's typical of the Scotch Game, and it is a logical consequence of the a-pawn's advance. Knowledge of the opening's ideas helped White to save his thinking time for the middlegame.

Before going further, I should warn the reader against the dangers of mechanically applying the rules of strategy. Taken to an extreme, they can kill the creative side in you and turn you into a chess dullard.

Here is an example. In 1974, the USSR championship qualifier took place in Odessa, Ukraine. In the game **Dvoretsky-Smyslov**, after the moves 1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♙b5 a6 4. ♙xc6 dxc6 5. 0-0 ♖e7 6. d4 exd4 7. ♖xd4 ♙g4 8. ♙f4 ♙xf3 9. gxf3 ♘f6 10. ♘c3 ♘h5 11. ♙g3 ♖d8 12. ♖e3 ♘xg3 13. hxg3 ♖c5 14. ♖ad1 ♖xe3 15. ♖xd8+ ♔d8 16. ♖d1+, the following position arose:



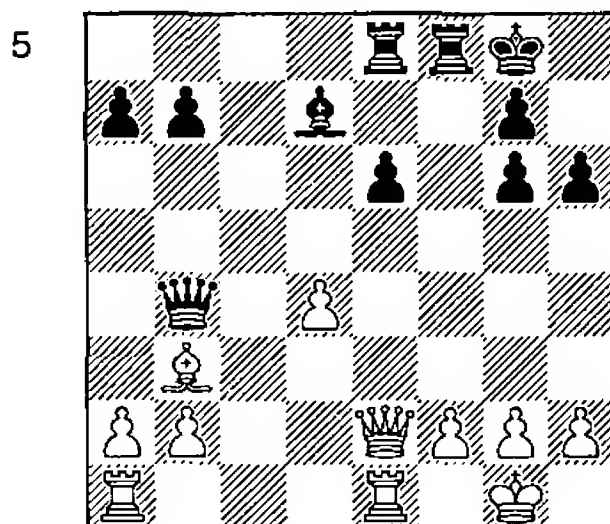
Black has to choose which way his king should go. The game continued: 16...♔c8? (A big positional mistake. The main events will take place on the kingside, and that's where Black should have directed his king. Furthermore, 16...♖d4 deserved consideration, with the idea of preventing White's f2-pawn from going to e3. The importance of this will become clear in a few moves.) 17. fxe3 g6? (Yet another mistake – the bishop doesn't belong on g7. 17...♙b4 was better.) 18. e5! ♙g7 19. f4 f6 20. exf6 ♙xf6 21. e4 h5 22. ♖g2 ♙xc3 23. bxc3 b5 24. e5 a5 (Had his king been on e7, Black could still mount some defense, but now it's all over. The penetration of White's king is decisive.) 25. ♖h3 b4 26. ♖h4 ♖e8 27. ♖g5 ♖e6 28. ♖h6 1-0.

Later, IM Mark Dvoretsky, investigating what led to the failure of the end-game master Vassily Smyslov, found an earlier game, **Bednarski-Smyslov** (Skopje Olympiad 1972). The first eleven moves were the same, after which Bednarski chose a different continuation: 12. ♖a4 ♘xg3 13. hxg3 ♖b4 14. ♖ad1 ♖xa4 15. ♖xd8+ ♔xd8 16. ♘xa4 g6 17. f4 b5 18. ♘c3 ♙g7 19. ♖g2 ♔e7 20. e5 ♖d8 21. ♖d1 ♖xd1 22. ♘xd1 ♔e6 23. ♖f3 g5 24. fxg5 ♖xe5 25. ♘e3 c5 26. b3 ♙f8 27. ♖e2 ♔d4 28. ♔d2 and here the draw was agreed.

Evidently, Smyslov was following the same pattern which he found in the game against Bednarski in his later game against Dvoretsky. There was, however, a small but very important difference – White's pawn had moved from f2 to e3. As a result, all the defensive ideas of the previous game (...g7-g6, bishop trade, the king's retreat to c8), turned out to be inapplicable. All this because after the e5-pawn is exchanged, it is replaced by another e-pawn, which is now passed.

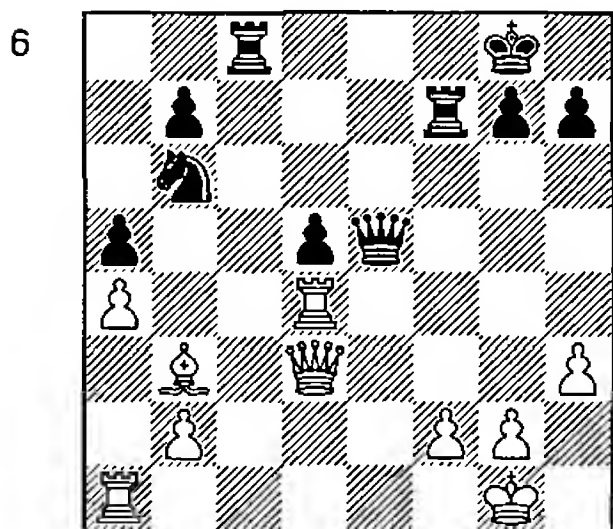
Alas, even the most venerable masters sometimes allow themselves to play by false analogy.

One more example:



This game between Botvinnik and Alatortsev was played in Leningrad in 1932. Black chose an incorrect plan of defense by playing 20...♖f6. He doubles his rooks on the f-file, but they have nothing to do there. As the game continued, the black rooks were up against a brick wall.

The Latvian IM Alexandrs Koblencs was aware of this game when he reached the following position against the Estonian Juri Randviir (Baltic Republics Championship 1961):



In this position Black played 24...♖cf8. Remembering the previous classic game, White confidently played 25. f3. Now, in his opinion, the pawn has neutralized the activity of the black rooks. One can only imagine his frustration when Black played the baffling 25...♖xf3!. Only now did White realize that he was blindly following a previous game without considering the concrete aspects of the position before him. In this case the pawn move was a blunder, since after 26. gxf3 ♔g3+ White is subjected to a mating attack.

The conclusion is obvious: it is necessary to broaden our chess horizons, study classical games, and work on

modern games — both ours and those of others. Even so, we need to apply our knowledge carefully, not blindly follow predetermined patterns.

This rule is not new. But even the most tired old rule definitely deserves to be recalled from time to time, lest it be forgotten.

Mastering any discipline creates certain stereotypes, and chess is no exception. Sometimes you have to pay a high price for following these stereotypes — it happens when they run counter to the situation on the board. That's what happened in the games discussed above.

Chess requires a lot of work. It is a complex game and many details can't be grasped quickly. Moreover, the rules, established by the founders of positional chess are not exhaustive and were not written as a substitute for creativity and imagination.

The reader already knows that the strategic fight is carried out through the use of certain tools. These tools are intended to help us achieve certain strategic goals. We can identify two types of tools. The “macro” tools, according to GM Alexey Suetin, are: attack and defense; maneuvering in equal positions; the timely transition from the middle-game into the endgame; and the transformation of positional factors.

But in addition to these major levers of chess strategy there is also a set of so-called “technical” tools which facilitate the implementation of a plan. Although such tools are closely related to tactics, they usually encompass more than simple tactical operations.

Strategic tools can take many forms, from the simple maneuver to something

more complex, such as the positional sacrifice.

To master evaluation methods, it is necessary to determine from which opening a position was reached. It is not irrelevant if the isolated d-pawn was a result of the Tarrasch Defense in the Queen's Gambit Declined or of the Tarrasch Variation of the French Defense. As there will be differences in the placement of the other pawns and of the pieces, there will be differences in the applicable strategic ideas.

There is a saying that the game is often started by 1. e4 e5, not from positional considerations, but only as a result of blindly following many other games. And this saying is perfectly valid. Achieving the conscious understanding of every moment of a chess game, including the very first moves, is the ultimate goal of chess improvement.

From the very beginning, the problem of the first move was critical for theoreticians and practical players alike. Evaluations of the move 1. e4 have been changing in light of practice.

In 1706, one Kez wrote a manuscript about the King's Gambit. As a result of his twenty years of practice, he came to a very curious conclusion: "1. e4 gives White such a large advantage that it should not be allowed. White should only be able to play 1. e3."

Early in the twentieth century, the talented Hungarian grandmaster Gyula Breyer wanted to prove that 1. d4 is better than 1. e4. Then again, in the 1930s, an outstanding analyst, Vsevolod Rauzer (co-inventor of the Richter-Rauzer Attack in the Sicilian), proclaimed that, "1. e4 is winning."

The purpose of these notes is not to resolve this controversy. We only want to give the reader food for thought on some chess issues.

After the very first move of the king's pawn, many different positions can appear. Our Ariadne's Thread in this maze of variations will be the struggle in the center, revolving around the proud e4-pawn.

The main mistake (according to some chess psychologists) is studying strategy and tactics — that is, positional and tactical tools — separately from each other. The deepening of our positional understanding should go hand-in-hand with the development of our tactical vision.

I will give just one example. The view that Botvinnik's play is dry and devoid of tactical brilliance has been voiced many times in the chess literature. Yet those who have studied his chess legacy know that this statement is far from the truth. The annotations to his own games are laced with tactical strokes and notes about possible ways to attack. It's no coincidence that Botvinnik's combination in his game against José Raúl Capablanca, which crowned a profound strategic idea, was considered the best of the twentieth century. Still more of his combinations were left "behind the scenes."

We can think of an example where one side had a big positional edge. Most of his pieces were developed and centrally posted. The rooks controlled an open file; the enemy king's position was very shaky. But, careful not to weaken the pawn structure in front of his own king, this chessplayer left all three pawns

on their original squares. He didn't fully appreciate the weakness of his back rank, and as a result he got checkmated.

At the risk of repeating myself, I have to say that improving our positional understanding needs to go together with improving our tactical vision. The author tried to follow this principle while working on the text of this book.

Focus on the Classics

I must mention one more issue. There are many books covering the subject of chess strategy, and many positions in this book might be covered elsewhere. The reason for this is that all books borrow from the games of the greatest players, and the best examples have already been discovered. But repetition, as we all know, is the mother of learning.

That's why the examples discussed in this book are borrowed mainly from classic games. Time marches on, information keeps accumulating, and many young chessplayers have never even heard of Tarrasch, Carl Schlechter, Isaac Boleslavsky, Vladimir Simagin, Alexander Kotov, Rauzer, or many others. Generations of chessplayers learned extensively from their legacy and derived esthetic pleasure by going over their games. I hope this book will serve as a link between today's generation and the great masters of the past.

Classic games are also very instructive in the sense that plans attempted by the masters of the past were often carried out without serious opposition, so we get to see how the idea is executed in practice.

Nowadays, if one player is trying to implement a plan, the other is usually

striving to prevent it. The first player has to come up with new ideas and a tense struggle ensues. Both players get tired, often get low on time, and the logic of the game gets disrupted. An inexperienced player studying those games might not fully appreciate the players' ideas, the shifts from various plans of attack and defense, the mutual mistakes. But in the games of the classical masters against weaker players, one side's plans usually come out very clearly.

That's why a player wishing to master this game has to revisit the best encounters of the past and become familiar with them, rather than focusing solely on modern games.

How to Use this Book

The text of the games is in the main given in its entirety, as it is useful to look at the broad picture of the game, including the ending.

The problems in the book are ranked by level of difficulty, although that is a very subjective criterion. Before playing out the moves, take some time to look at the position and come up with your own evaluation. Choose the first move and back it up with a short line (3-5 moves), which might also have some sidelines to be accounted for. Don't get frustrated if you can't solve all the problems. These positions were borrowed from the games of the great masters, and even they were not always up to the task. Just try a bit harder and you will be rewarded. As Shakespeare once said: "That which ordinary men are fit for, I am qualified in. And the best of me is diligence."

I recommend dedicating at least one hour a day to solving the problems. Try

to stay focused. Look up the answers only after writing down your solution, or if you can't solve the problem in the given period of time. To make the conditions more realistic you can set up a chess clock.

It is my hope that working on this book will help you to broaden your chess understanding.

Finally, I would like to say a bit about my approach to this book. I am far from thinking that chess started the day I was

born. From my very first moves I tried to climb on the shoulders of giants and learn what they already knew.

The positions in this book belong to the classics and have been scrutinized by hundreds of specialists. I am very thankful to all of them for helping me to reach my own conclusions and to lift my understanding of the noble and beautiful art of chess.

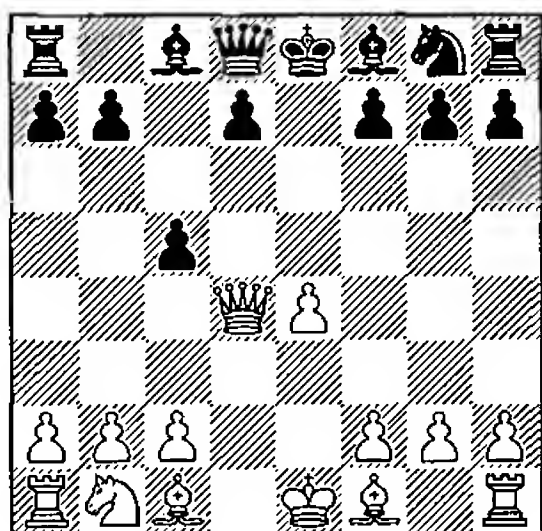
Nikolay Yakovlev
St. Petersburg, Russia
May 2010

Chapter I

Strongpoints and Weaknesses

No. 1: Pawns and Weak Squares

7



Q. Black has just played 5...c7-c5. Is this move: a) useful, as it gains the initiative; or b) harmful because it weakens the center squares?

5... c5?

It's definitely weakening! There is no doubt that the fate of this weak pawn is connected with the outcome of the whole battle. It is as if a demon pushes it towards the last rank, where it can become what it was truly meant to be — a powerful queen. However, as the pawn marches forward it loses the support of

its comrades and can become subject to attack.

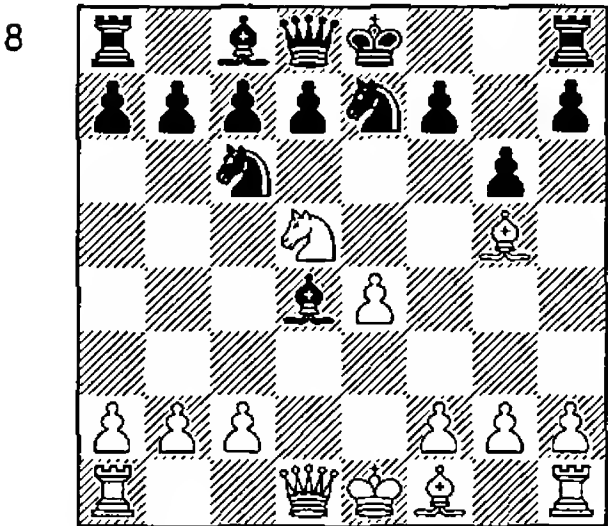
This is what an experienced chess-player should determine when looking at this popular position from the Scotch Game. It is difficult to say how many times this move has been played, but, in the author's experience, this move is popular among beginners who can't resist hitting their opponent's queen. Experienced players are not so rash; however, this very fact makes it hard to explain why the move was made by a member of a national team, in the game **Troianescu—K. Benites** (Moscow Olympiad 1956).

Before we look at the game analysis, let's talk a little about the role of pawns. Philidor famously wrote that, "Pawns are the soul of chess." What gives these puny infantrymen their strength, allowing them to dictate conditions? The answer is the wisdom of the rules of chess. The inability of the pawns to capture directly forward makes it possible to create a front line of opposing pawn chains between the two enemy armies.

Now let us look at the role of the pawns in the game under consideration.

The move 5... c5? weakens the central squares in Black's camp and makes his position difficult. The theory of weak squares was formulated by the first world champion, Wilhelm Steinitz. It is still one of the cornerstones of a positional game. According to this theory, a weak square is one that cannot be defended by a pawn. This weak square is called a "hole." It is best to explain this concept with an example.

Diagram 8 is the position from the game **M. Movsisyan—T. Patton** (Tulsa 2004), after the opening moves 1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♙c6 3. ♘c3 g6 4. d4 exd4 5. ♘d5 ♙g7 6. ♙g5 ♘ge7? 7. ♘xd4 ♙xd4:



White's next move comes as a bolt from the blue: 8. ♙xd4! and after 8... ♘xd4, White characteristically checkmates the black king: 9. ♘f6+ ♙f8 10. ♙h6#. This was possible because of the weak dark squares. In particular, f6 was weakened by the destruction of the dark-squared bishop.

So a weak square is one that can safely be occupied by enemy pieces, thereby creating an important stronghold in the position. While the defender is focused

on the task of expelling these pieces, the attacker will have time to strengthen his position further. He will be able to maneuver his other pieces and redirect his attack. It is especially difficult to defend when this strongpoint is in the vicinity of your king.

Weak squares are also dangerous in the endgame. When the major pieces have disappeared and the kings become active, you should take possible pawn moves into account. It is very important to be able to advance a pawn, depending on the circumstances, one or two squares. The player with the fewer weak points will have an edge in the fight.

The most important feature of pawns is that they can only move forward. If you mistakenly move a piece, it is possible to return it to its former square on the next turn. This is not possible with a pawn. It is much more difficult to improve the position of the pawns; for this reason a player should be very careful with each pawn move.

Steinitz was the first to express the idea that the pawns are strongest in the initial position. Unfortunately, it is impossible to keep the pawn chain intact; it will inevitably be modified during the game. Diagram 7 allows you to see that the defensive ability of the black pawns has decreased considerably after the move ...c7-c5. The d5 square has no natural defender, and enemy pieces can occupy it easily. In the game, this weak square attracts White's pieces like a magnet. A knight will be especially well placed on d5, so Black should use his pieces to cover that point.

As we discussed, a weak square is one that cannot be defended by pawns and

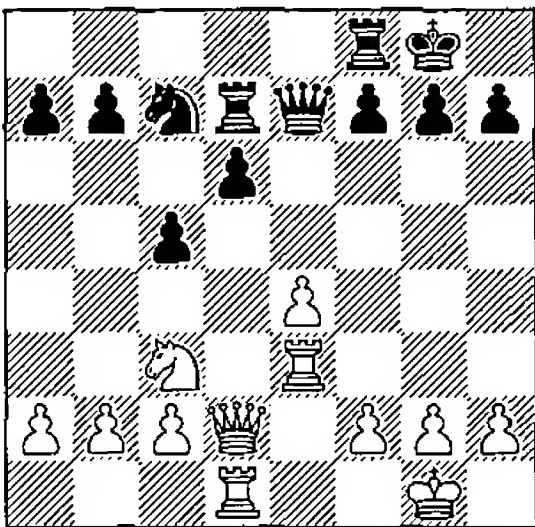
can be used as an outpost by the opponent to improve his position. In this case, the weakness at d5 is exacerbated by its central location. We will discuss the importance of the center in a later chapter.

6. ♖d1 d6
7. ♙b5+ ...

This move is ideal. It helps White to exchange the light-squared bishops, decreasing the number of defenders of d5. Besides, White intends later to put his pawns on c4 and e4. In such circumstances the bishop can become “bad,” as the pawns will limit the bishop’s scope. Here we can see how moves in the opening are closely connected to plans in the middlegame.

7... ♙d7
8. ♙xd7+ ♖xd7
9. 0-0 ♘f6
10. ♘c3 ♙e7
11. ♙g5 0-0
12. ♖d2 ♖ad8
13. ♖ad1 ♘e8
14. ♖fe1 ♘c7
15. ♙xe7 ♖xe7
16. ♖e3 ♗d7

9



17. ♘d5 ...

White’s play during the previous stage of the game is very clear. He de-

veloped his pieces and castled. The exchanges were not useful to Black because they resulted in a better position for White. White’s knight is well posted, and Black has a number of problems. Because the c-pawn pushed forward on move 5, Black’s d-pawn lacks the support of a neighboring pawn.

17... ♖d8
18. ♘xc7 ...

The question is: what to do with the beautifully placed knight? We need to remember that *putting the knight in the center is not the end in itself* – it’s only the means! It can be compared to beginning chess-players giving unnecessary checks without understanding that the move is only meant to force an opponent to defend his king. And perhaps, after a number of thoughtless attacks, the king may find a safe haven. A similar idea applies here.

18... ♖xc7
19. ♖d3 ...

The frontal attack on the weak square d6 follows. Certainly, this is only a short-term plan, but it should be reinforced on every move. While Black is stuck defending d6, White can focus his efforts elsewhere and soon Black’s fortress will fall!

19... ♖fd8
20. c4 ...

White has very effectively arrested the d-pawn by putting his infantrymen on e4 and c4.

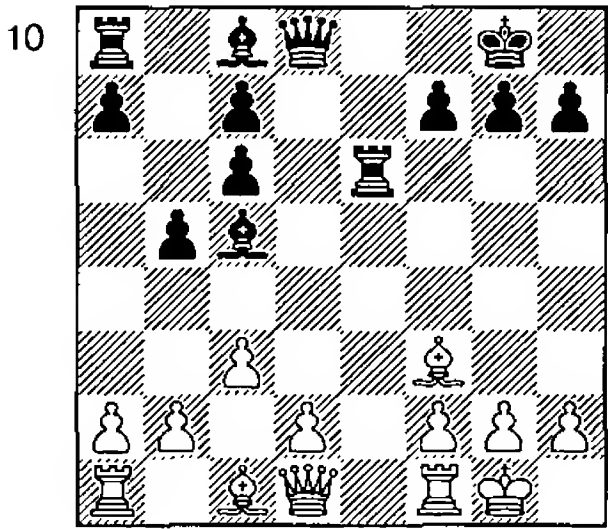
20... f6

The advance e4-e5 was a real threat, but this weakens the kingside. The moves against the d-pawn were at a standstill; however, White’s attacking possibilities are not yet exhausted. The previous moves led to a situation where Black’s

forces were tied to defending the center pawn. This allows White to focus on the kingside.

Winning chess often involves application of the *principle of two weaknesses*. If one side's position has a weakness, it can often be defended as many times as it is attacked. In that case, the attacker should aim to create a second weakness, making it difficult or impossible for the defender to protect both.

The concept of a "weakness" applies beyond the notion of an isolated pawn that is subject to attack. Briefly stated, a weakness is a positional flaw. This includes an open file that can be occupied by the opponent's major pieces, a remote passed pawn, an inactive piece, a cut-off king, and the like. Here are some examples:

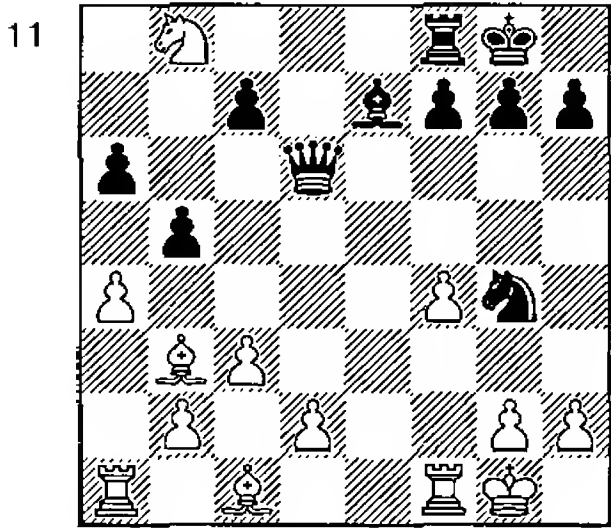


The American chess genius Paul Morphy not only excelled in beautiful and unexpected combinations, he also had a superior understanding of positional factors. He was inclined to the fast mobilization of forces, but at the same time he aimed to slow the development of the opponent's forces.

In the game **Paulsen–Morphy** (New York 1857), Black took advantage of his

opponent's oversight by creating a significant weakness on the d3 square, and occupying it with the queen: 12...♙d3!.

As a result of this maneuver, Black has a strongpoint in White's position that seriously restricts the mobility of White's pieces and pawns. The d2-pawn is tightly blockaded, and White's queen's bishop is cut off from the game. These circumstances gave Black excellent prospects for a successful attack.

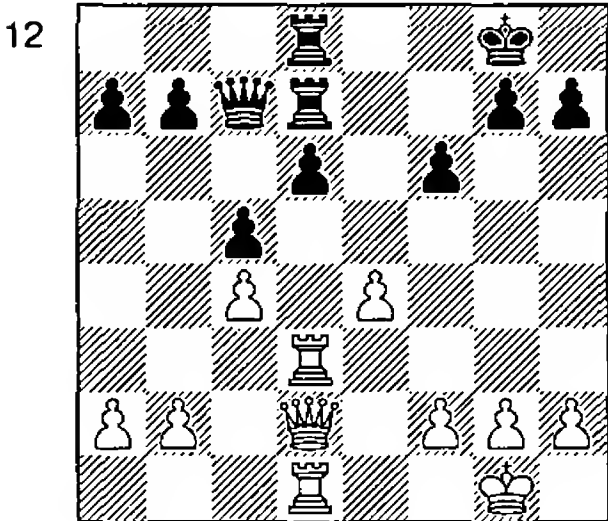


The same idea can be seen in modern practice. Moreover, average players can add this arrow to their quivers. (See *Diagram 11*.) In the game **G. Goldberg–Hermlin** (Moscow 1958), the young Estonian, then a Class B player, made an extremely strong positional move: 16...Qd6-d3!, occupying the weak square with the queen. The idea is analogous to the one Morphy executed a century earlier.

Now let's return to the principle of the two weaknesses. The further course of the game will consist of alternately attacking both weaknesses. The opponent will be forced to constantly shift his attention from one weakness to another, until his forces will eventually reach the breaking point.

The attacking side relies mainly on his space advantage and the harmonious coordination of his pieces. The game can be won because the defender's forces get in each other's way and are slower to regroup.

Returning to Troianescu-Benites, White begins to loosen the pawn shield around the king through direct attack.



21. ♖h3! g6

Black should only make this move after the possible maneuver ♖d5-h5.

22. ♖d3 a6

23. ♗f4 ♔g7

24. h4 ...

White continues to undo Black's position on the kingside by advancing the rook's pawn. In general, if the black pawn is advanced to the g6 square, the forward rush of the h-pawn sharply raises the temperature of the attack.

24... b5

The natural reaction in this situation is to seek counterplay. Here this results in the loss of material and a hastening of the end. The further course of events requires no comment.

25. cxb5 axb5

26. h5 c4

27. h6+ ...

As a result of h-pawn's march, Black is decidedly weak on the dark squares. In addition to defending the d6-pawn, Black must watch g7, where the white queen aspires to go. Once the f6-pawn is weakened, Black's position can no longer be defended.

27... ♔g8

28. ♖d5 ♔f7

29. ♖xb5 c3

30. bxc3 ♗xc3

31. ♖bd5 ♗a3

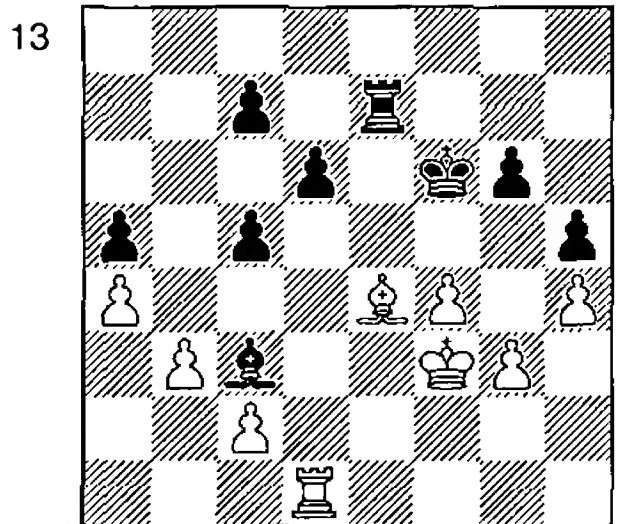
32. e5! f5

33. ♗g5

1-0

No. 2:

Two Weaknesses in the Ending



Q. Evaluate the position and suggest a plan for White.

This position is from **Faibisovich—Westertinen** (Leningrad 1969). Material is equal, and if it were not for the rooks, the players could agree to a draw because of the bishops of opposite color. However, the presence of the major pieces radically alters the situation.

The condition of the pawn structure is vital. The weakness of the a5- and g6-

pawns forces Black to adopt a defensive stance. At first sight, it seems like these weaknesses can be easily defended, but White can alternately shift his pieces to attack one side or the other. Besides, White constantly threatens the thrust f4-f5, which would undermine the h5-pawn.

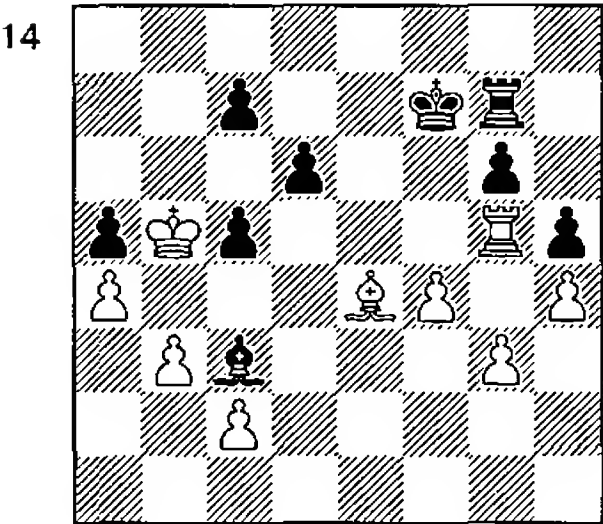
44. ♖d5! ...

The white rook occupies the specific staging area from which it can access g5 in order to pin Black's forces to the defense of the g6-pawn.

44... ♖g7
45. ♖g5 ♙d2
46. ♔e2 ♙c3
47. ♔d3 ...

The white king's route becomes clear: he should attack the a5-pawn. Here is the principle of two weaknesses at work!

47... ♙e1
48. ♔c4 ♔a7
49. ♔b5 ♙c3



50. ♖d5! ...

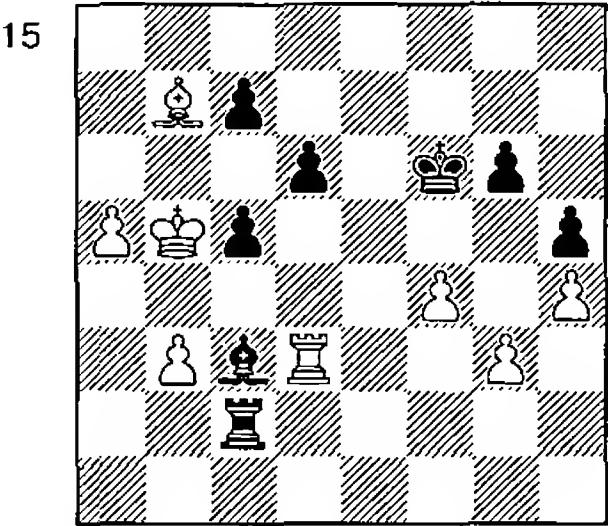
The rook returns to its staging area. Faibisovich intends to maneuver the rook over to d3 and block the e1-a5 diagonal with c2-c3. Black has no way to oppose White's plan.

50... ♙e1
51. ♖d3 ♔f6

52. c3 ...

By blocking the line of the black bishop, White wins the a5-pawn. Although the c3-pawn will soon be lost, it has served its purpose: the white a-pawn becomes passed.

52... ♖e7
53. ♙b7 ♖e2
54. ♔xa5 ♖c2
55. ♔b5 ♙xc3
56. a5 ...



Black has restored material equality, but nothing can stop White's passed pawn from promoting. Though Black correctly puts up stiff resistance, the outcome of the game is decided.

56... ♙e1
57. a6 c4
58. bxc4 ♙f2
59. ♖a3 c6+

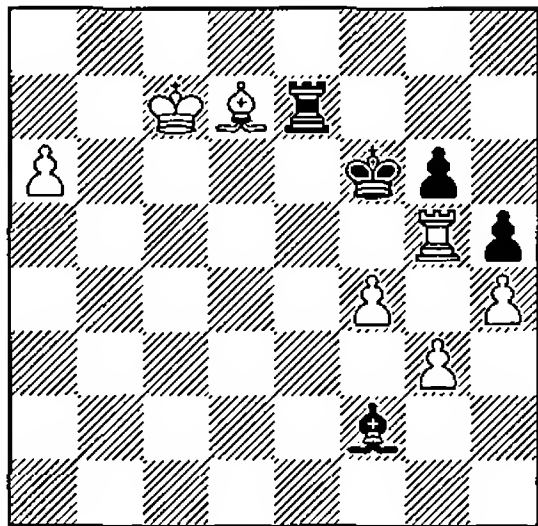
If Black used the bishop to stop the pawn by 59... ♙a7, then 60. ♙d5 could follow, followed by putting the king on c6.

60. ♔xc6 ♖xc4+
61. ♔xd6 ♙a7
62. ♙c6 ♖b4
63. ♔d7 ♖b1
64. ♖a5 ♖b3
65. ♖g5 ...

White again reminds the opponent that the g6-pawn is weak.

65... ♖e3
66. ♔c7 ♜e7+
67. ♙d7 ♙f2

16



Black's last move was not a mistake. Even after 24... ♙e3 25. ♜a5 ♙a7 26. ♜d5 ♙g1 27. ♔b7, the white pawn could reach the promotion square. Now White gets one more opportunity.

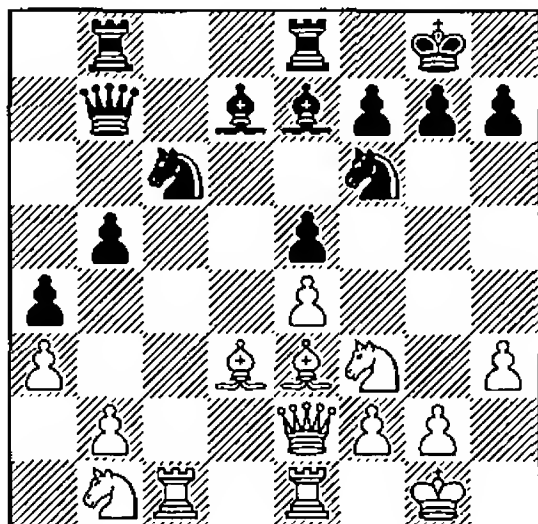
68. f5! ...

The game continued 68... ♖e3 69. ♜xg6+ ♔f7 70. ♙e6+ ♔e7 71. ♜g7+ ♔f8 72. ♜f7+ ♔e8 73. a7, when Black finally capitulated.

This game was an excellent example of the principle of two weaknesses.

No. 3: Invasion Point

17



Q. In the diagram position, Black played 23... ♙d8. Is this continuation correct, strengthening Black's position; or is it wrong, giving White greater chances to win?

23... ♙d8?!

In the game **Karpov–Hort** (Lucerne Olympiad 1982), in response to 24. ♙c3 Black prepared the answer 24... ♙a5. He intended to transfer the bishop to b6, thereby strengthening the pressure on d4. Nonetheless, this continuation is misconceived. In this case, Black loses control over c5, which is very important in this type of position. Besides, a prospective bishop attack on f6 becomes unpleasant.

Black should continue 23... b4, when Karpov indicated 24. ♙a6 ♔a8 25. ♙c4 h6 would lead to a situation with limited prospects for White, and Black's position would remain strong enough.

24. ♜c5! ...

White immediately capitalizes on his opponent's oversight and grabs the initiative. The squares b5 and e5 are threatened.

24... b4

As Black cannot defend both weaknesses, he is forced to advance this pawn in worse circumstances than one move ago. Until this point, I have abstained from providing long variations, but this one is not too complicated: 24... ♙b6 25. ♜xb5 ♙d4 26. ♙xd4 (but not 26. ♙xd4 because of 26... exd4 27. ♙xd4 ♙xb5) 26... ♙xb5 27. ♙xb5 ♙xd4 28. ♙xe8 ♙xe8 29. ♙xd4 exd4 30. ♔c4 ♔xb2 31. e5. White's advantage is evident because the weakness of the opponent's pawns will demand constant attention. Besides, Black's knight has little mobility, hindered as it is by the e-pawn.

A chessplayer’s brain scrolls through many variations during a game. This one might have been among them. This game took place almost three decades years ago and a human player could be proud of such calculation. However, my computer now suggests that Black holds after the move 31... h6, which eliminates the back-rank weakness.

25. ♖b5 ♜a8
26. ♖c1 ...

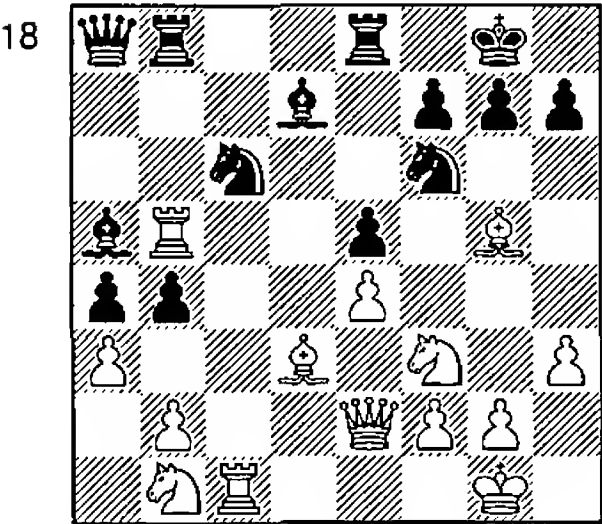
White’s last moves strengthen the position of his pieces. He could not take the b-pawn because it would leave the more important pawn on e4 undefended. White controls the most significant points on the queenside and forces his opponent to focus completely on defense. White’s rook has an important task on b5.

26... ♙a5

Now the capture of the e4-pawn is fraught with serious trouble for Black: 26... ♜xb5 27. ♙xb5 ♞xe4 28. ♜c4 ♞a5 29. ♜xb4.

It is clear that the bishop on d8 was improperly placed. Having rerouted it to a5, Black defends the b4-pawn and connects his rooks. But now the f6-knight has lost a defender, and White takes advantage of this immediately.

27. ♙g5! ...



It is very important to develop the initiative. White will constantly threaten to capture the knight, which will seriously compromise Black’s pawn structure on the kingside. Black should admit that his previous decision was incorrect and return the bishop to d8, but this is hard to do in practice!

27... ♜ec8
28. ♞bd2 ...

White does not rush to take the knight, as Black does not have time to retreat. The variation 28... ♞e8 29. ♜xb8 ♜xb8 30. axb4 ♙xb4 31. ♞c4 f6 32. ♙e3 shows White’s increasing advantage. Now he threatens b6 with the knight.

28... bxa3

Black tries to relieve his position by a series of exchanges.

29. bxa3 ♜xb5
30. ♙xb5 ♞d4

31. ♞c4 is threatened, so Black seeks salvation in further piece trades.

31. ♜xc8+ ♜xc8
32. ♞xd4 exd4
33. ♞f3 ♙c3

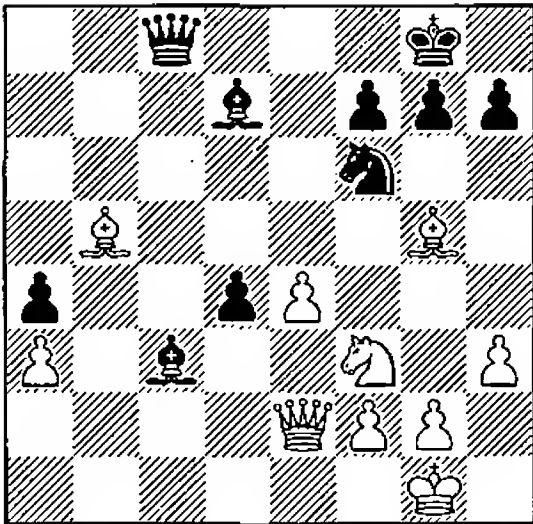
This is not the most suitable place for the bishop. It will be cut off from the main action, becoming a passive observer of its own king’s tragedy. However, Black had nothing better. Though the number of pieces has decreased, this has not eased Black’s problems. White threatens 34. ♙xf6 and 34. e5. The lines 33... ♜c5 34. ♙d3 ♞e8 35. e5, or 33... ♜c3 34. ♙xf6 followed by e4-e5 are unpromising for Black.

(See Diagram 19)

34. ♙xf6! ...

White has been demonstrating the principle that *the threat is stronger than*

19



the execution. When I was younger, my first chess coach explained this as follows: suppose you are walking down the street and you see a brick hanging off a wall. You are worried about the brick falling, but when it falls, you won't be threatened by it any more, even if it falls on your head. Now the "brick" has fallen, and the position of the black king soon becomes tenuous.

34... gxf6

35. e5! ...

White organizes an attack with a reduced force. The position of the black king becomes even more open, and g5 is made available to the knight.

35... f5

After 35...gxb5 36. ♖xb5 fxe5 37. ♜xe5 ♔f5 38. g4 White's queen and knight work together and support each other, unlike the black queen and bishop.

36. ♙d3 ♔c5

If 36...h6, White would increase the pressure by playing 37. ♞h4 and then moving the queen to h5.

37. ♞g5! h6

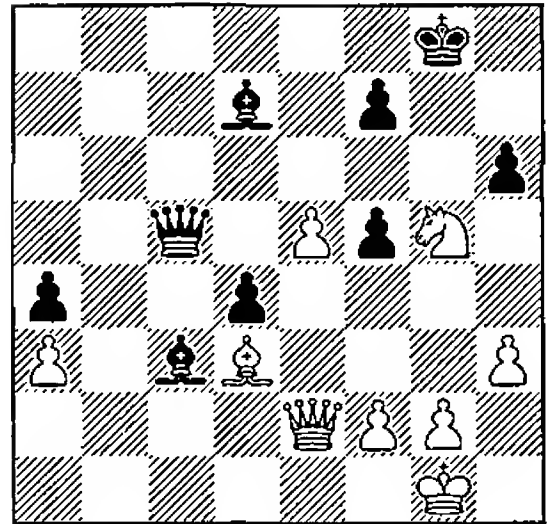
(See Diagram 20)

38. e6! fxe6

39. ♞xe6 ♔d6

Black has no good reply. Regardless of where the queen goes, White's attack

20



develops unhindered despite the small number of pieces on the board, i.e. 39... ♙xa3 40. ♙fx5 ♙c1+ 41. ♙h2 d3 42. ♙g4!.

40. ♙xf5 d3

Even after 40...♙xe6 41. ♙xe6+, salvation is unlikely for Black.

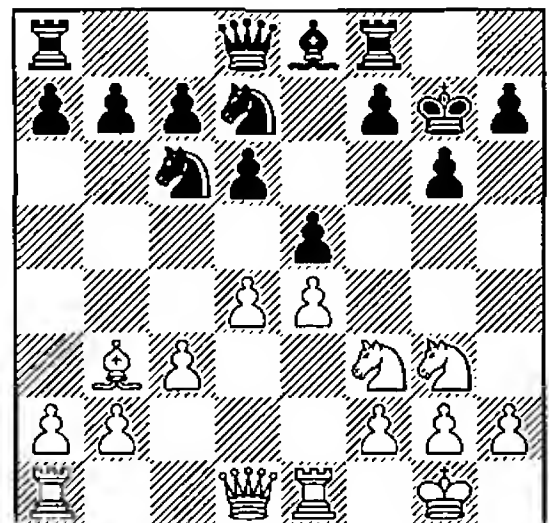
41. ♙g4+ ♙f7

42. ♙g6+ ...

If 42...♙e7 43. ♙h7+ ♙f6, then the unexpected 44 ♙xd3! would bring the game to an end. In view of further material losses, Black resigned. 1-0

No. 4: Holes in the King's Castle

21



Q. In this position, Black's kingside pawn structure is weak. How can White take advantage of this?

Castling short usually creates a reliable shelter for the king. However, during the course of the game, the squares f6, g7, and h6 have become weak because the dark-squared bishops have been traded off. This is a typical motif for White. Now only the king defends these squares. Still, it looks like there is no way to get into Black's fortress to make use of this circumstance. But there is a way. In **Makarichev–Bellin** (Hastings 1979/80), White made a retreat square for the light-squared bishop on the a2-g8 diagonal.

15. a4! ...

This is good preparation for an attack on the kingside, as it allows White's bishop to remain on the attacking diagonal. Besides, White threatens to capture space on the queenside by advancing to a5. Therefore, the opponent's answer is forced.

15... a5

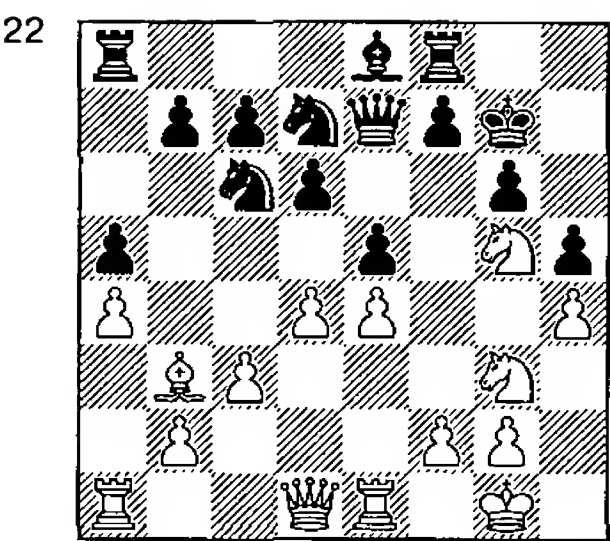
16. h4! ...

This, too, is a typical method often used against the fianchetto. It threatens a further pawn advance and forces the weakening of the opponent's pawn structure. If Black ignores this attack, then White can advance h4-h5xg6 and his knight will find a position on the kingside — the g5 square. This is very dangerous for the black king.

16... h5

Black simplifies White's task. He weakens the important square g5 near his king, and the white knight settles on it comfortably. Stronger resistance would be possible after 16...f6.

17. g5 e7



18. f4! ...

With the previous move, the white knight has occupied a position close to the enemy king. His next move enables the second knight to participate in the attack.

18... exf4

19. e2 d8

20. xf4 c6

21. d3 ...

White starts to bring up his major pieces. Recall that the move 15. a4 made the advance of Black's f-pawn considerably more difficult, because it made it possible for the bishop to keep an eye on e6, where the knight could now hop in case of such an advance. As a result, White has time to gather his reserves.

21... h8

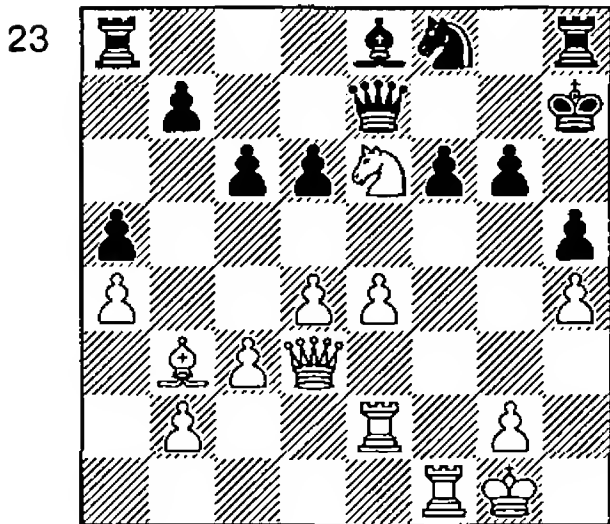
The attempt to activate the knight by 21...f6 fails to 22. e5! dxe5 23. dxe5 c5+ 24. d4 xd4+ 25. cxd4 h7 26. e6! with material gain for White.

22. e2 f6

Black could have carried out this advance and forced a knight move, but he spent a tempo on the rook repositioning which moreover weakened the f-file. This will make a difference later on. The

white knight has completed its task, so it is free to move about. Black has not achieved a salvageable position. Even after 22...♘f8 23. e5! d5 24. ♖f1, his fate would have remained grim.

23. ♘ge6+ ♘xe6
24. ♘xe6+ ♙h7
25. ♖f1 ♘f8



Both sides were striving for this position — Black, because he considered that the variation 26. ♘xf8+ ♖xf8 offered defensive chances; and White, because he was ready for the final attack.

26. e5! dxe5
27. dxe5 ♘xe6
28. exf6! ♙c5+

Black had high hopes for this last move — now he has an extra knight! Has White miscalculated?

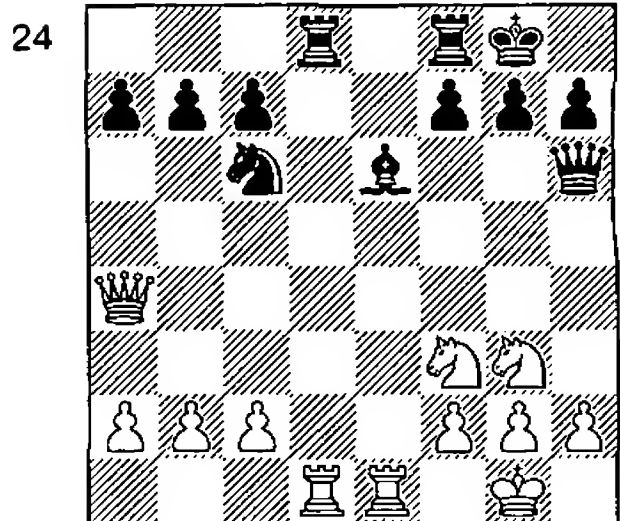
29. ♙h1 ♘f8
30. ♖e7+ ♙h6
31. ♙e4! ...

White captures the e-file and the seventh rank, and also strengthens the b1-h7 diagonal. Black has no reason for hope.

31... ♘d7
32. f7 ♖f8
33. ♙c2 1-0

The curtain falls.

No. 5: Inducing Weaknesses



Q. In this position, is the move 16. ♘d4 a) correct, leading to an advantage for White; or b) erroneous, yielding only equality?

16. ♘d4! ...

The white pieces are more active. The white queen's position is much more promising than that of its counterpart, as an attack on the kingside is not expected. On the other hand, Black's queenside pawns can become a real problem. In order to take advantage of this White exchanges a pair of knights and rooks.

16... ♘xd4
17. ♖xd4 ♖xd4

Otherwise White would double on the d-file.

18. ♙xd4 b6
19. ♙e5 c5

It is instructive to follow this game, **Teichmann—Allies** (Glasgow 1902). Even the smallest weakness turns out to be fatal for Black. The white knight will land on d6, where it will be invulnerable because of the forced advance of the c-pawn. This knight will restrict Black's piece play. White also

dominates the e-file, which prevents the black rook from moving till Black makes an escape square for the king by advancing a pawn. However, such a move would create dangerously vulnerable points that are accessible to the white pieces.

20. f4 ♖c8
21. f5 ♘b7
22. ♕e7 ♙c6
23. ♖e2 f6

This is necessary; otherwise f5-f6 will force ...g7-g6 when White's access to h6 would lead to quick defeat for Black.

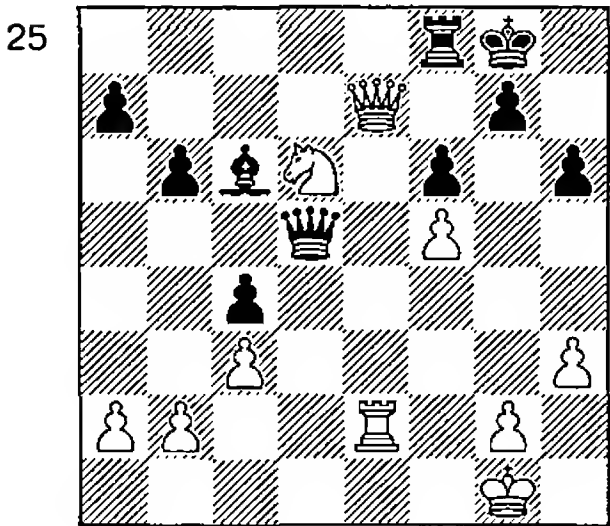
24. ♘e4 ♙d5
25. ♘d6 ♖c6

White threatened 26. ♙xf8+ and 27. ♖e8#.

26. h3 c4

Otherwise White plays c2-c4 to banish the queen from the a2-g8 diagonal, followed by ♙e7-e6.

27. c3 h6



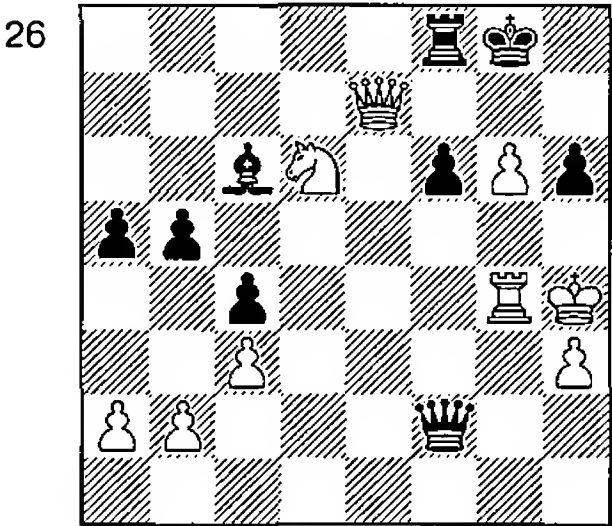
This move creates a new weakness on g6. Surprisingly, White exploits this by moving his king to this square to threaten checkmate on g7. Despite the time investment involved in making such a march, the plan was a complete success. White can easily realize this

aggressive plan because his pieces are active and very well coordinated. On the other hand, the black army is tied down by the considerable threats to their king.

28. ♖h2 b5
29. ♖g3 a5
30. ♖h4 g6

If White plays 31. fxg6??, then he will get mated by 31...♙g5#. But Teichmann easily defends and Black is soon helpless.

31. ♖e3 ♙xg2
32. ♖g3 ♙f2
33. fxg6 ♙f4+
34. ♖g4 ♙f2+

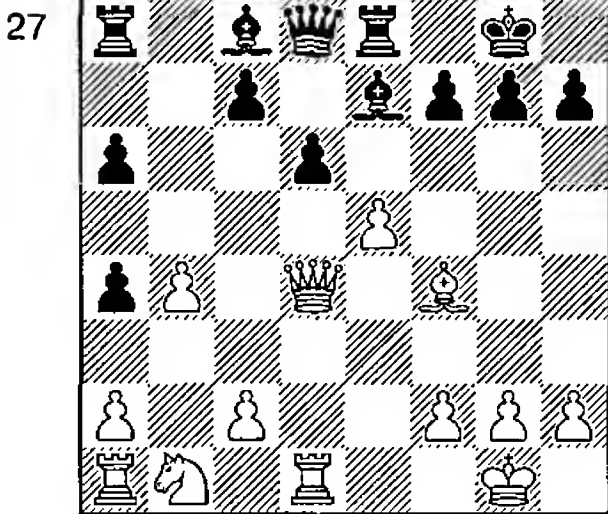


35. ♖h5
- 1-0

This is one of the best examples of the exploitation of weak points.

Going back to Diagram 24, there is nothing in the position that points to an attack on the king. It was simply a matter of weak pawns and slightly more active pieces. The contours of the attack began to appear after some exchanges took place. Suddenly, the dominant factor in the position became the increased power of the remaining pieces, which enabled White to conduct a virtuoso attack.

No. 6: One Weakness Leads to Another



Q. Evaluate the consequences of 14... dxe5.

14... dxe5!

With this move, Black points out the pitfalls of the white b-pawn's advance: the a1-h8 diagonal is weakened and there are problems defending the pawn. In the endgame the numerous weaknesses in the White position will be fatal. Black's control over the e-file and the advantage of the bishop pair allow him to take the initiative.

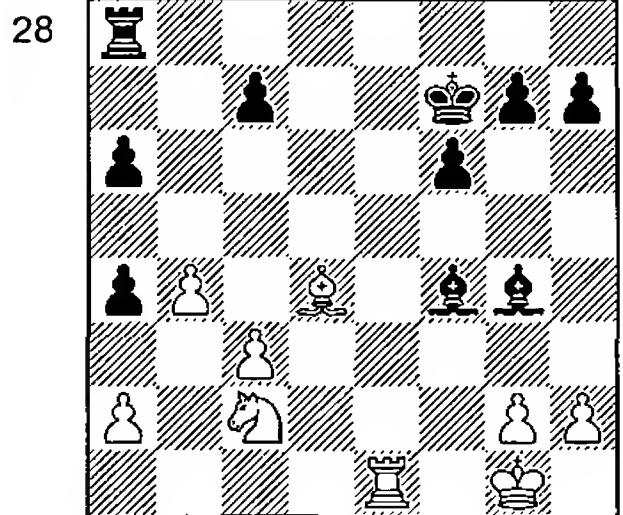
15. ♖xd8 ♜xd8
16. ♜xe5 ♜f5
17. f4 f6
18. ♜d4 ♜e7!

Black realizes that *the activity of the pieces is more important than the gain of a pawn* – it's a guiding principle in this game. Black awaits even more favorable conditions to gain a material edge. The initiative is in Black's hands.

19. c3 ♜d6
20. ♞a3 ♜g4
21. ♞f1 ♞e4!

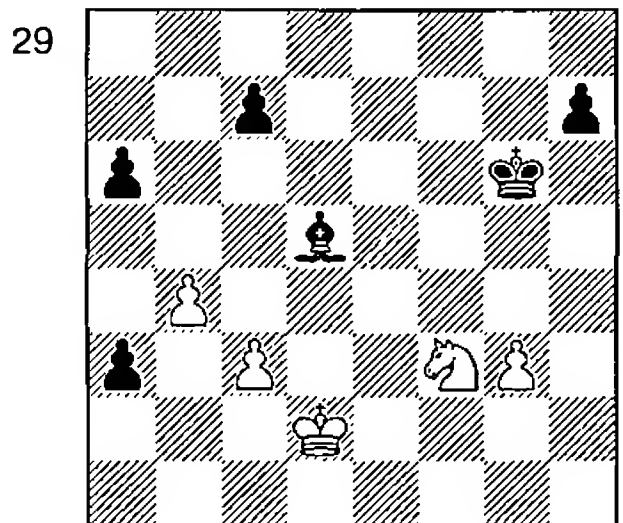
Hopefully, the reader will have noticed that Black threatens the b4- and f4-pawns. One or the other is doomed.

22. ♞c2 ♜xf4
23. ♞ae1 ♜xe1
24. ♞xe1 ♜f7!



Black has achieved a material advantage and has increased his positional advantage by trading rooks. The game **Zhuravlev–Klovans** (Riga 1979), soon ended in victory for Black.

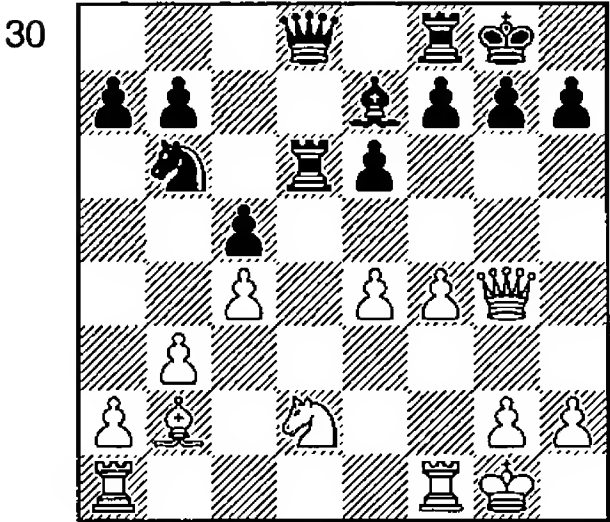
25. ♞e4 g5 26. g3 f5 27. ♞e1 ♜d2 28. ♞f1 ♞e8 29. ♞f2 ♞e2 30. ♜f1 ♞xf2+ 31. ♜xf2 f4 32. ♞e1 fxg3 33. hxg3 ♜e6 34. ♞f3 ♜c1 35. ♜e3 ♜xe3+ 36. ♜xe3 ♜xa2 37. ♞g5+ ♜g6 38. ♞f3 a3 39. ♜d2 ♜d5



The power of the bishop over the knight in positions with pawns on both flanks is especially evident in this game.

40. ♞e5+ ♜f5 0-1

No. 7: A Pseudo-Weakness



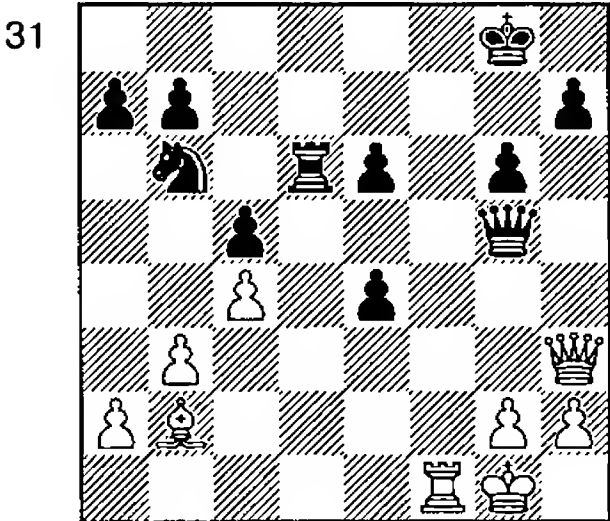
Q. How should Black defend?

In the game **Romanovsky–Grigoriev** (Leningrad 1930), White threatens mate on g7. How does Black defend? After 16... f6 Black's position doesn't look promising and he would have to bear in mind the threat of e4–e5. And 16... g6 looks bad as it weakens the dark squares.

16... g6!
17. Nf3 f5!

Black plays for a counterattack. After the exchange of the e4-pawn, the bishop can be placed on f6 to neutralize the pressure on the long diagonal. Therefore White sacrifices a pawn to renew the attack.

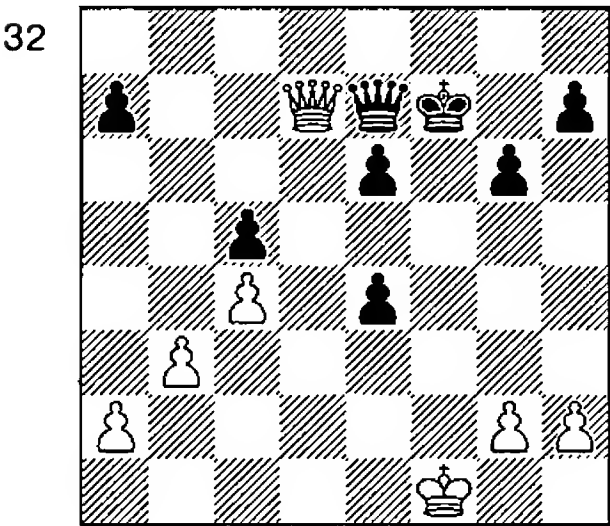
18. Wh3 fxe4 19. Ng5 Qxg5 20. fxg5 Rxf1+ 21. Rxf1 Wxg5



22. Qf6?! ...

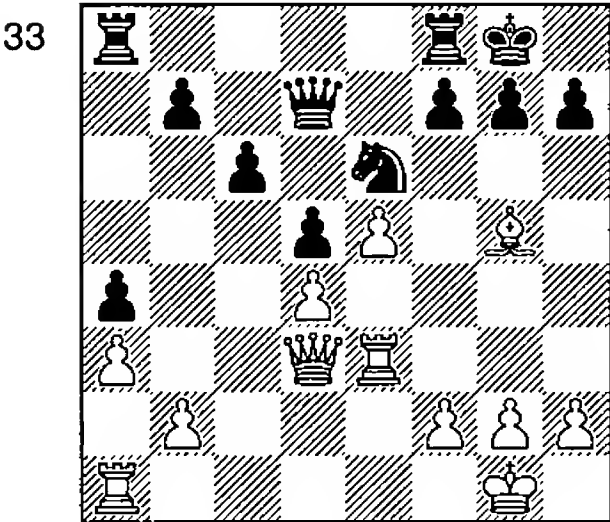
White could have forced a draw by 22. Qc1 We5 23. Qf4 Qd4+ 24. Qe3 We5 25. Qf4, but he overestimates his chances.

22... Wh5 23. Wg3 Rd1 24. Wb8+ Qf7 25. Wb7+ Nd7 26. Qg5 Rxf1+ 27. Qxf1 Wxg5 28. Wxd7+ We7



Black has a winning ending.

No. 8: Attack and Defense in a Sharp Position



Q. Would you choose a) 22. Qf6, or b) 22. Wf5?

In the game **Smyslov–Keres** (Absolute Championship of the USSR, 1941) White has a positional plus on the king-

side and threatens to transfer the rook to g3 or h3. Therefore, by moving the knight to e6 Black threatens to snap off the g5-bishop. This is a very important element of defensive strategy. We will encounter this idea again. In most cases, a piece trade simplifies the position and decreases the attacking side's potential. Such an exchange is almost always desirable for the defending side. So how should White react?

As Botvinnik indicated the best continuation of the attack was 22. ♔f6!?. Black's position then becomes critical if he accepts the sacrifice, i.e. 22...gxf6? 23. ♖f5! ♜fd8 24. ♜g3+ ♚f8 25. exf6 ♖d6 26. ♖xh7 ♚e8 27. ♜e1. And if 22...♞f4 23. ♜g3 ♞g6! 24. ♔g5.

However, Smyslov played the other move.

22. ♖f5 ♞c5!

White still threatened 23. ♔f6, therefore Black immediately offers an exchange of queens.

23. g4? ...

Another error. White doesn't want to waste time by moving his queen, but this impetuous move leads to further simplification where the poor position of the white pawns becomes obvious. However, according to Botvinnik, White had at least equal chances after 23. ♖f4 ♞e4 24. f3 ♞d2 25. ♔f6.

23... ♖xf5

24. gxf5 ...

(See Diagram 34)

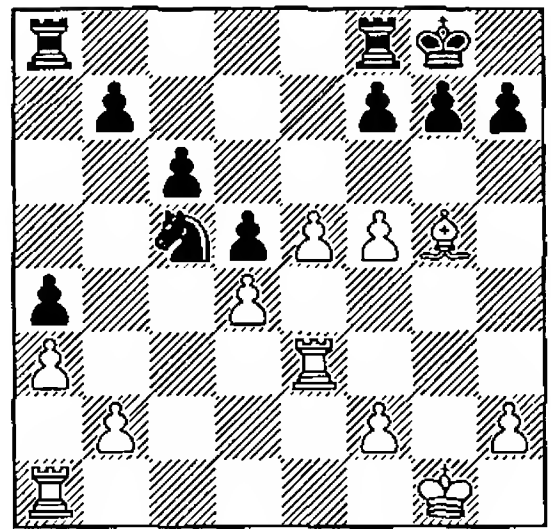
24... ♔f6!

Accurately calculated!

25. exf6 ...

Continuations like 25. dxc5 fxc5 26. ♜f3 or 25. ♔xf6 ♞e4 26. ♔h4 ♜xf5 do not give White equality.

34



25... ♞e4

26. fxcg7 ...

Black is also on top after 26. ♔h4 gxf6 27. ♜g3.

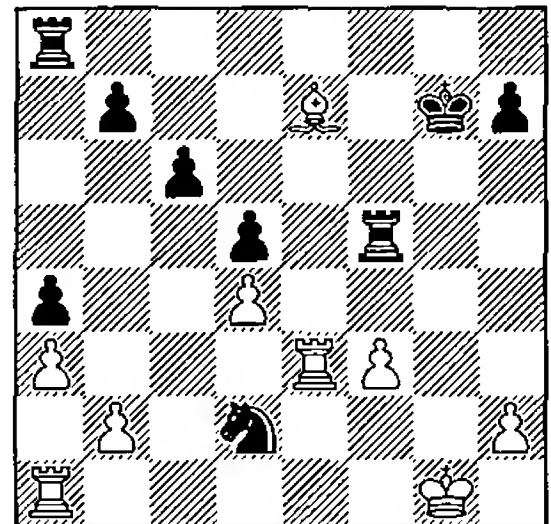
26... ♜xf5

27. ♔e7 ♚xg7

White's attack has ended and the result is unpleasant: the pawn structure is seriously weakened.

28. f3 ♞d2

35



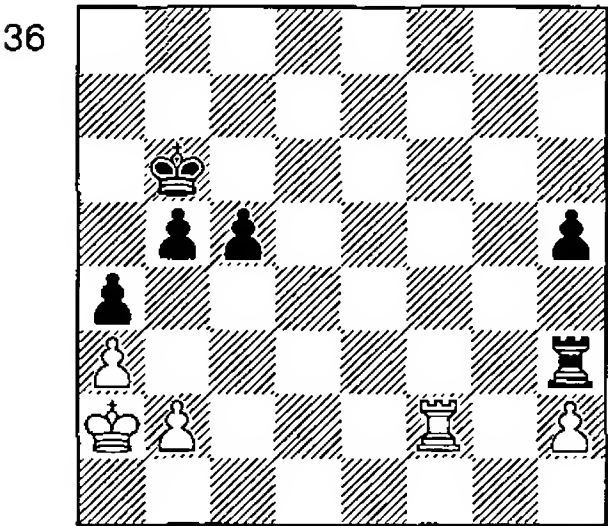
29. ♚f2? ...

The right decision was to play the king to g2. However, even in this case Black has an obvious advantage in the ending because of the weak white pawns (four pawn "islands" against two for Black) and the weak squares on the queenside. White played 29. ♚f2 thinking that the

knight check on e4 was pointless and that the knight would be played to c4 instead.

However, Keres has delved deeply into the ensuing ending, and plays for further simplification to deprive White of counterchances. White's pawn weaknesses (b2, d4, and h2), combined with the poor position of his king, will tell in the end.

29...♖e8 30. ♖ae1 ♘e4+ 31. ♔g2 ♖xe7 32. fxe4 ♖xe4 33. ♖xe4 dxe4 34. ♖xe4 ♖b5 35. ♖e2 ♖b3 36. ♔f2 ♔f6 37. ♔e1 h6 38. ♖g2 ♔e6 39. ♔d1 ♔d5 40. ♔c2 ♖h3 41. ♖d2 ♔c4 42. ♔b1 h5 43. ♔a2 ♖h4 44. ♖f2 ♔xd4 45. ♖f7 b5 46. ♖f2 ♖h3 47. ♖d2+ ♖d3 48. ♖f2 ♔c4 49. ♖c2+ ♔d5 50. ♖g2 ♖h3 51. ♖d2+ ♔c5 52. ♖c2+ ♔b6 53. ♖f2 c5

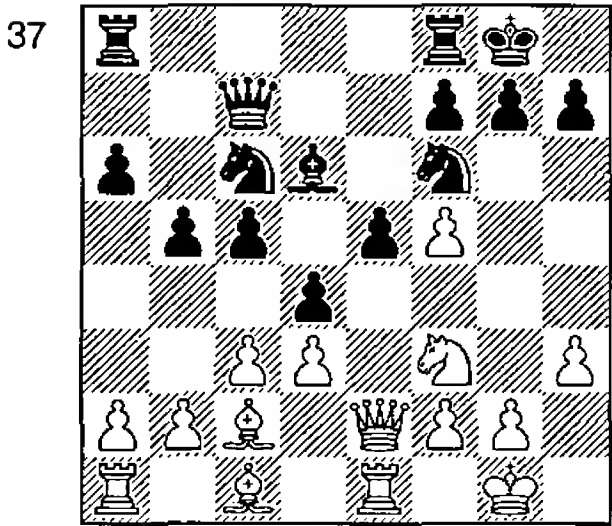


Analyzing endings is not the purpose of this book; however, this position is extremely educational. Black maneuvers to open the second rank, advance his pawn to h3, and then put the rook on g2 to transition to a winning pawn endgame.

54. ♖f6+ ♔a5 55. ♖f2 c4 56. ♖g2 c3 57. b4+ axb4 58. ♔xb3 c2+ 59. ♔xc2 ♖a3 60. ♔b2 ♖f3 61. ♖e2 h4 62. ♖d2

h3 63. ♖e2 ♔a4 64. ♔b1 ♖f1+ 65. ♔c2 b4 66. ♔d3 ♖d1+ 67. ♔c2 0-1

No. 9:
Clearing the Field for the Horse



Q. Evaluate 18. ♖g5.

18. ♖g5? ...

This leads to the weakening of White's position in the center. White is seduced by the threat 19. ♖xf6 gxf6 20. ♔d2, but this maneuver turns out to be a loss of time. As a result, Black not only gains the d4 square for the queen's knight, but also c3 for the king's knight.

Therefore, White should have played 18. ♖d2, so that 18...dxc3 19. bxc3 ♔d5 could be answered by 20. ♖b3.

18... dxc3!

19. bxc3 ...

If White persists with 19. ♖xf6, then he will lose a pawn after the intermediate 19...cxb2.

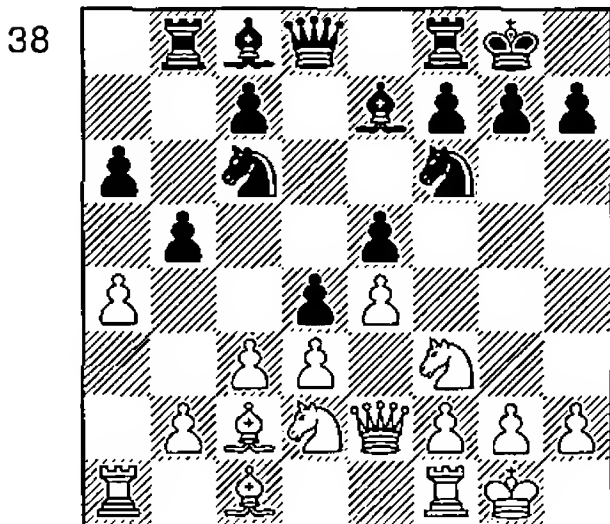
19... ♔d5

20. ♖d2 b4!

Thus did the young amateur Botvinnik, playing against Proskurin (Leningrad 1925), carry out the maneuver to seize the central square d4. This meth-

od is typical for the Spanish Game and has been tested successfully in similar positions.

Another example is the following position from the game **Spassky–Taimanov** (Leningrad 1956).



Here Black carried out the maneuver 11...dxc3 12. bxc3 b4 13. ♖c4 ♗g4 14. ♗b2 ♗c5 15. ♜ad1 bxc3 16. ♗xc3 ♞d4 17. ♗xd4 ♗xd4, which let him capture the central point and subsequently win the game.

Now let's return to Proskurin–Botvinnik.

21. c4? ...

White's last chance was to open the game by 21. cxb4, keeping the light-squared bishop active. After the game move, the bishop has no scope and the Black pieces seize the center without resistance.

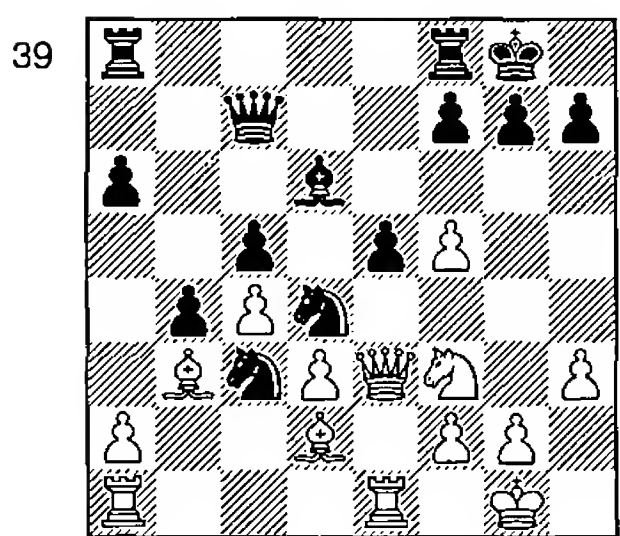
Black's advantage is obvious. Moreover, White lacks for useful moves.

21... ♞c3

22. ♞e3 ♞d4

Here is a striking example of centralization. The black knights dominate on the central squares and survey the entire board.

23. ♗b3 ...



23... e4!

The decisive move. I direct the reader's attention to the fact that strategy walks arm in arm with tactics, as the following variations demonstrate: 24. dxe4 ♗f4! 25. ♞d3 (capturing the bishop by 25. ♞xf4 fails to 25... ♞de2+ 26. ♞xe2 ♞xe2+) 25... ♞xf3+ 26. gxf3 ♞ad8 27. ♗xf4 ♞xf4 28. ♞e3 ♞xe3 29. fxe3 ♞d2. Now if 30. a3, then 30... ♞b2 31. ♗d1 ♞d8, and Black's possession of the second rank and the d-file renders White's position defenseless.

24. ♗xc3 ♞xf3+

This exchange is a direct consequence of Black's previous move. Now the white pawns are irreparably broken.

25. gxf3 ♗f4!

Accuracy is necessary even when the win is at hand. With this move Black ensures that White continues to be saddled with tripled isolated pawns. Instead after 25... bxc3 26. fxe4, things would have been much different.

26. ♞xe4 bxc3

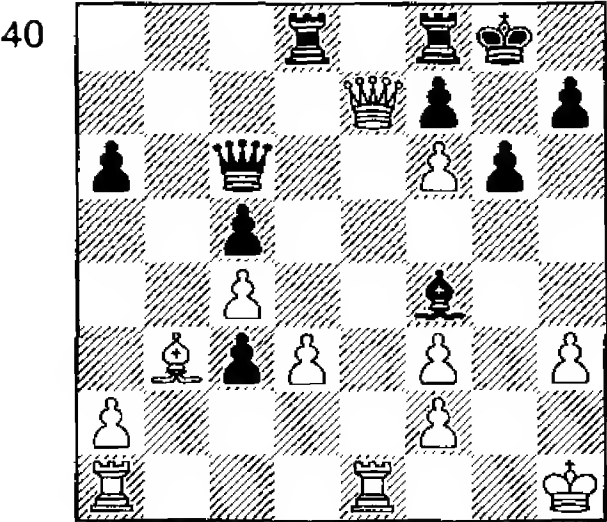
27. ♞h1 ♞ad8

28. f6 g6

In this situation, it is safe to weaken the dark squares in front of the king. Remember: *it's a weakness only if the opponent can take advantage of it.* Therefore,

Black does not want to spoil his pawn structure by 28...gxf6.

29. ♖e7 ♜c6

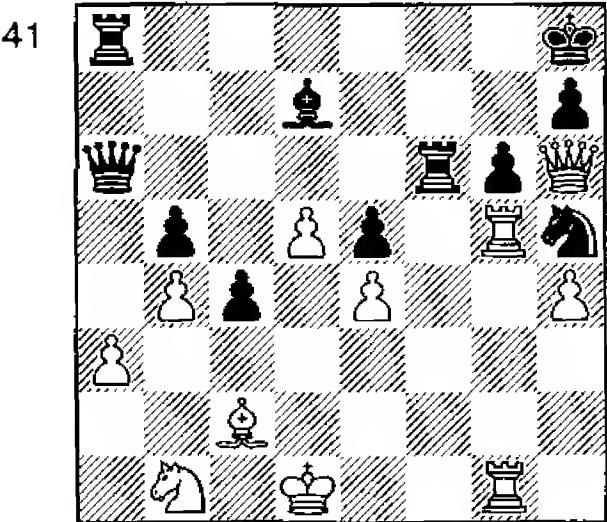


No further comment is necessary, especially as White spent the last part of the game in a stupor under the influence of the vigorous and mature game of the 14-year-old Botvinnik.

“We recognize a lion by his claws!”

30. ♖e4 ♜xf6 31. ♖e2 ♜f5 32. ♖f1 ♙d2 33. ♜e4 ♜xf3+ 34. ♖g2 ♜xd3 35. ♙d1 c2 36. ♙e2 ♜c3 0-1

No. 10: To Attack, or to Defend?



Q. Was White’s last move of 43. ♜g2—g5 a) correct as it bolsters the attack on the

kingside, or b) incorrect because it weakens squares in White’s camp?

The position under consideration aptly characterizes the chess dictum: *weak squares of a certain color form strategic lines for enemy pieces to penetrate.*

White is weak along the dark-square diagonal a7-g1. His biggest fear is that Black’s pieces will occupy the d4 and f4 squares. Black could then use these strongpoints to attack White’s king, which is in a precarious situation anyway.

White needed to cover the a7-g1 diagonal by 43. ♖e3. This would not have solved all his problems, but it was the least of evils. In this case Black could keep an advantage by 43...♜af8, when the outcome of the game would be impossible to predict.

But in the game Tolush—Alatortsev (USSR Championship 1954), White was carried away by tactical variations and didn’t sense the danger. As a result, he made a strategic error.

43... ♜b6!

Black threatens to infiltrate behind enemy lines and indirectly protects the knight from capture.

44. ♜e1 ♜f2

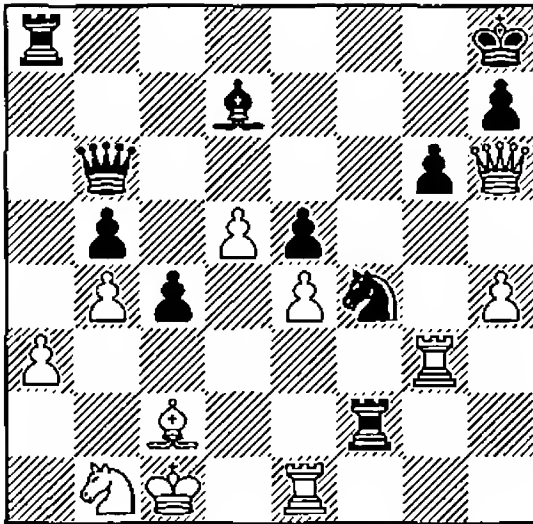
An invasion of the major pieces onto the second rank is always very dangerous for the defending side. This game is no exception.

45. ♙c1 ♞f4
46. ♜g3 ...

(See Diagram 42)

The rook returns to base, but it’s too late. The changes to the position during the last few moves are irreversible. Black has established strongpoints on the squares f2 and f4. The black queen can

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join the game along the a7-g1 diagonal at any moment. The coordination of the attacking pieces has increased so much that the decisive combination is imminent.

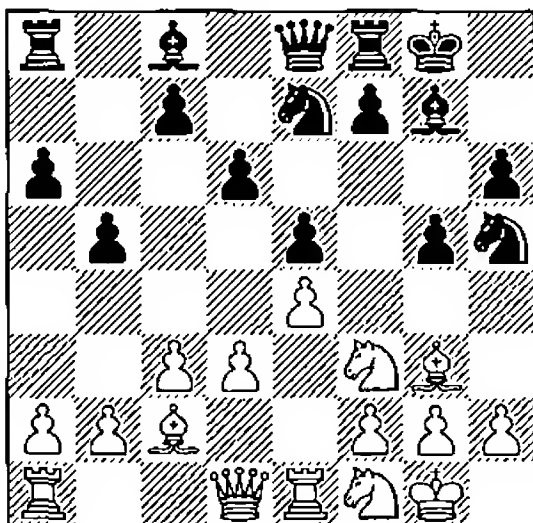
46... ♖xc2+
 47. ♔xc2 ♚f2+
 48. ♘d2 ♚xg3
 49. ♚g5 ♚d3+

There are already some solutions in this position, for instance, to take the rook.

50. ♔c1 ♚xa3+
 0-1

No. 11: The Right Moment

43



Q. Does 15. a4 deserve attention?

15. a4! ...

Played at the right time! White creates pawn pressure on the queenside, threatening to capture the a-file after 16. axb5. Now Black cannot reply 15... ♖d7? in view of 16. ♘xe5; or 15... ♗e6? because of 16. ♘xg5 ♘xg3 17. ♗xe6. The vulnerability of the knight on h5 is a factor in both variations. Therefore, Black goes for simplification, reconciling himself to the loss of the initiative on the kingside.

15... ♘xg3
 16. hxg3! ...

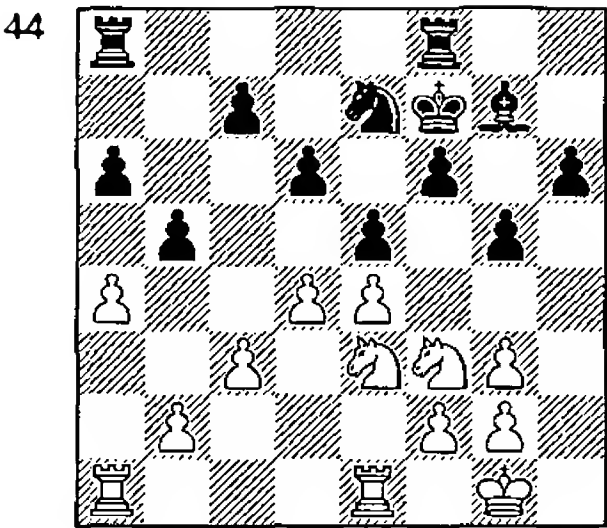
This move should come easily to the experienced chessplayer. But inexperienced players should consider the position deeply. First, it is necessary to decide whether to take back with the knight or with the pawn. Taking with the pawn prevents Black from using the f4 point. In this regard, his initiative is completely spent. At the same time, White's knight has the e3 square. So the decision was to take with the pawn. But which one? As a rule, it is better to capture toward the center – in this case, with the h-pawn.

Later, we will analyze other games where White captures with the f-pawn in similar positions. There will be time enough for explanations. Patience!

16... ♗e6
 17. d4 f6
 18. ♖b3 ♗xb3
 19. ♚xb3+ ♚f7
 20. ♚xf7+ ♚xf7
 21. ♘e3 ...

(See Diagram 44)

It may be ascertained that the ending favors White. He stands more freely, while Black has a bishop hemmed in by its own pawns. In addition, White



threatens to capture the a-file by doubling his rooks on it. Though Black neutralizes this danger, he can't overcome the basic deficiencies of his position. **Smyslov** skillfully achieved this ending against **Euwe** in Groningen in 1946 and deservedly won.

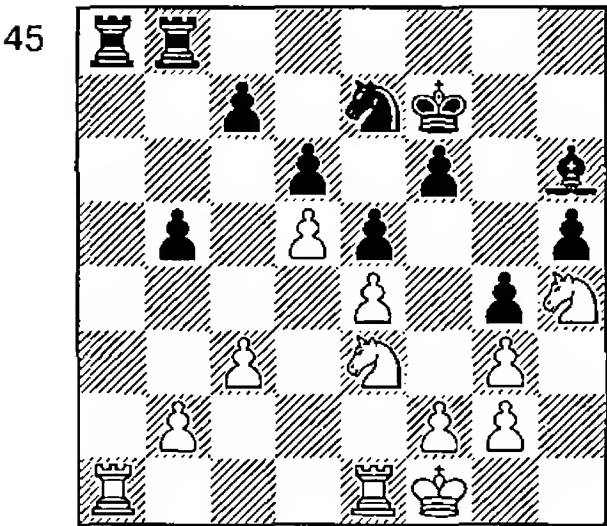
- 21... ♖fb8
22. axb5 axb5
23. d5 ...

In keeping with the precepts of World Champion José Raúl Capablanca, White closes the center.

- 23... h5

This inhibits the advance of the pawn to g4, which would completely clamp Black's position.

24. ♔f1 g4
25. ♞h4 ♟h6



26. ♞ef5! ...

It is just this knight that should go to f5! It is always necessary to consider the opponent's intentions, no matter how great one's advantage. It's no secret that **Euwe** desires to trade the bishop for the knight, thereby considerably improving his position.

- 26... ♜g8
27. ♔e2 ♞a4

Black misses an opportunity to pose problems for his opponent. Instead 27... ♜g5, aspiring to trade minor pieces, was worth considering. Then it would be easier to defend the rook ending. After all, it is well known that this kind of ending harbors very drawish tendencies. A material advantage of one or even two pawns is often insufficient for victory. As **Tartakover** quipped, "All rook endings are drawn!"

28. ♜xa4! ...

White exchanges major pieces and increases his advantage.

- 28... bxa4
29. ♜b1 ♜b3

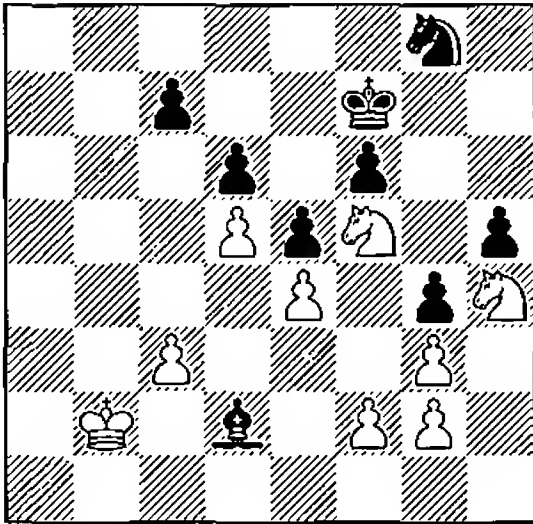
An involuntary undertaking. White threatened to move the king to c2, which would free the rook to attack the a-pawn. For sure, 29...a3 does not help in view of 30. b4, and Black's lonely pawn is doomed to destruction.

30. ♔d3 a3
31. ♔c2 ♜xb2+
32. ♜xb2 axb2
33. ♔xb2 ...

The position has simplified. Black has managed to eliminate the danger on the queenside, but his bad bishop remains and the knight is practically trapped.

- 33... ♞d2

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Alternatively, Black could play 33... ♖g5 to get rid of the bishop, but this is not as effective as before. In the case there would follow 34. ♔b3 ♕xh4 35. gxh4 ♘e7 36. ♘xe7 ♔xe7 37. ♔c4 f5 (the passive defense 37... ♖d7 is weaker because of 38. ♖b5 followed by c4-c5). Now White's clearest path to victory is 38. f3! f4 39. ♔b5 ♔d7 40. c4 ♔d8 41. ♔c6 ♔c8 42. c5 dxc5 43. ♔xc5 ♔d7 44. ♔c4 ♔c7 45. ♔b4 ♔d6 46. ♔b5. *Zugzwang*.

This variation is long, but easy enough to calculate. Avoiding this effort means missing an opportunity to reach a worthy position in our remarkable art.

The purpose of Black's maneuver is to activate the bishop.

34. ♔c2	♕e1
35. f3	♘e7
36. ♘xe7	♔xe7
37. fxg4!	...

This important move fixes the pawn structure on the kingside.

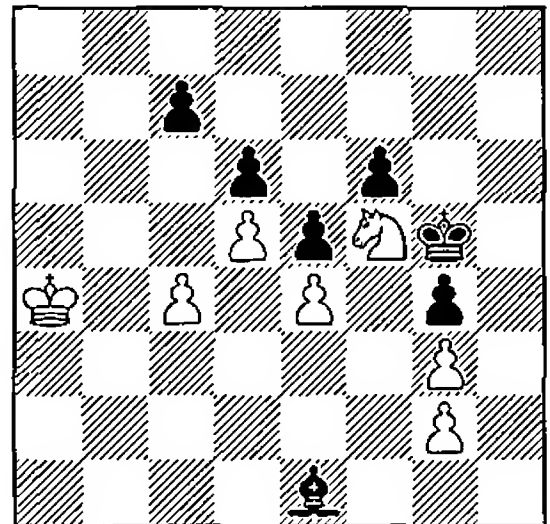
37...	hxg4
38. ♘f5+	♔f7
39. c4	♔g6
40. ♔b3	♔g5

It was possible to prolong the game by passive defense, but not to save it. Therefore, Black wants to utilize one last chance — sacrificing the bishop to open

the way for the king into the enemy position. I direct the reader's attention to this idea. Though in the game this maneuver did not bring success, it should be part of every chessplayer's arsenal.

41. ♔a4 ...

47

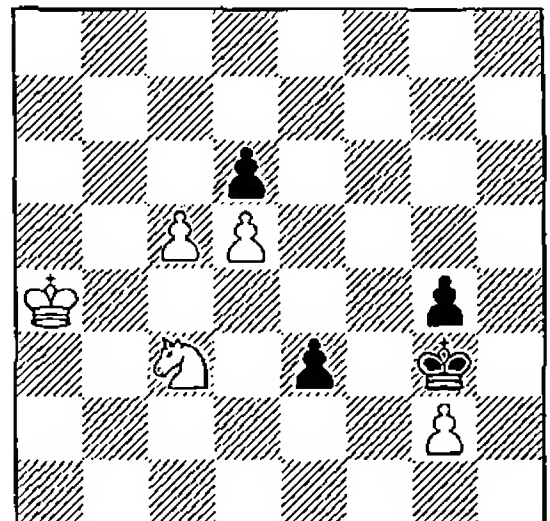


41...	♕xg3
42. ♘xg3	♔f4
43. ♘h5+	♔xe4
44. ♘xf6+	♔f5
45. ♘e8	e4
46. ♘xc7	e3
47. ♘b5!	...

Here is one point of White's maneuvers: on 47...e2 there follows 48. ♘d4 and 49. ♘e2, arresting the passed pawn.

47...	♔f4
48. ♘c3	♔g3
49. c5!	...

48

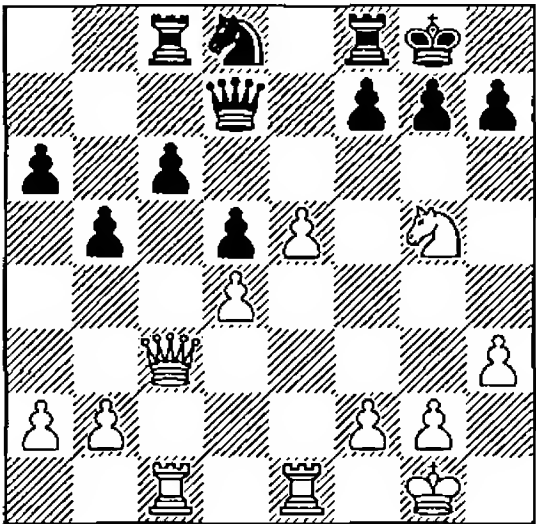


White carries out the pawn break that ends the game. Having exhausted all possibilities for resistance, Black resigned.

1-0

No. 12: Provoking a Weakness

49



Q. Which would you prefer: a) 20. ♖d3, or b) 20. ♖a3?

20. ♖d3! ...

In the game **Boleslavsky–Flohr** (Candidates’ Tournament 1950), White saw through the complications and found a double attack on a pawn and rook. Which rook, you ask? Why – the rook on f8! If you’re wondering how, wait one more move.

The immediate 20. ♖a3 gives nothing, as Black has time to eject the knight by ...h7-h6. Therefore, White first forces Black to weaken his king’s position with ...g7-g6.

20... g6

21. ♖a3 ...

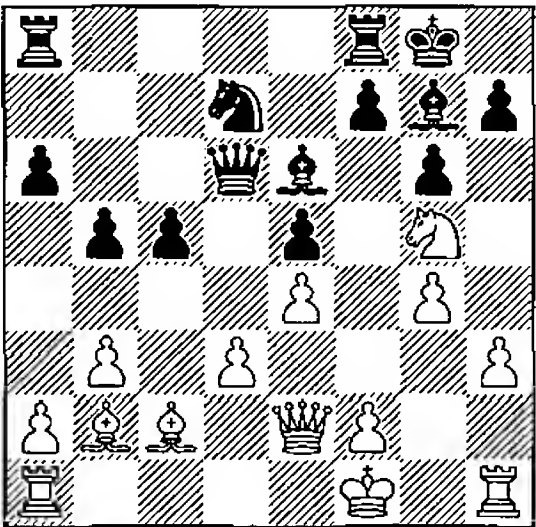
Now 21...h6 fails to 22. ♞h7!. The point of White’s queen maneuver becomes clear. One move earlier, the leap of the knight to h7 would have been useless, as the rook had an escape square on e8.

But now the f6 square is weakened and the knight can go there with great effect.

21... ♞e6 22. ♞xe6 fxe6 23. ♚xa6 ♚f7 24. ♜f1 ♜a8 25. ♚xc6 ♜xa2 26. ♚xb5 ♚a7 27. ♚b4 ♜a6 28. ♜c5 ♜b6 29. ♚c3 ♜f7 30. b4 ♜a6 31. b5 ♜a2 32. ♜c6 ♚e7 33. b6 ♚b7 34. ♜xe6 ♚a6 35. ♚e3 ♚g7 36. ♜f6 ♜b7 37. ♜b1 1-0

No. 13: Activity +
Enemy Weaknesses = Attack

50



Q. Suggest a way for Black to attack.

White’s king cannot castle, its pawn cover is seriously compromised, and there is no coordination between the white pieces. Moreover, the light-squared bishop on c2 is passive, and White is weak on the dark squares, as is the d3-pawn. The initiative belongs to Black. In such situations, an attack should finish the game. The attack is the culmination of the initiative, which is generally understood as the longterm result of a strategic plan. **Chigorin** begins the attack in the second game of his match with **Gunsberg** in 1890 as follows:

20... ♞b8!

This is the beginning of a delicate positional maneuver that leads to the capture of

the central square d4. This square was weakened as a result of White's previous play.

The time one spends organizing an attack can be spent by the opponent devising countermeasures and neutralizing the enemy's plans. In other words, for the improvement of the pieces this means that we need to consider more than just the current activity of the pieces, but also the potential for activating each piece after one or more moves.

Which pieces are potentially active? First of all, those that can be quickly transferred to active positions. In the game under consideration, the knight achieves this aim by returning to its starting square on b8!

21. ♖xe6 ...

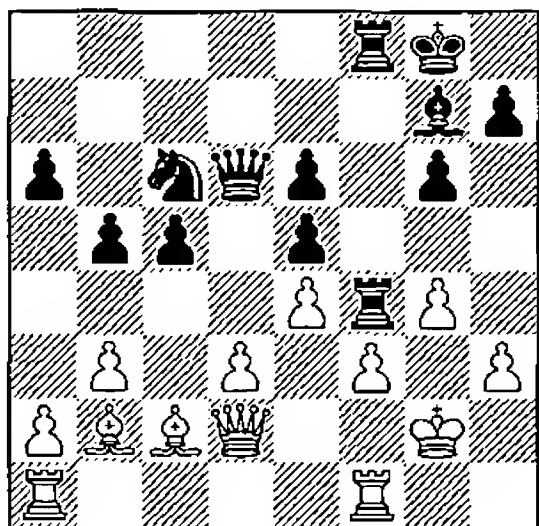
If White did not take the bishop, Black could open the file by ...f7-f5.

21... ♜f6!

Black voluntarily damages his pawn structure. As compensation, the f-file is opened for the rooks. Thus the game can finish before it reaches an endgame, when such defects in the pawn structure could be exploited.

22. ♔g2 ♜a7
23. ♜hf1 ♜af7
24. f3 ♞c6
25. ♚d2 ♜f4

51



This game represents an educational opportunity for exploiting a weak square complex. Here it is the dark squares.

26. ♜ad1 ♚e7
27. ♚e1 ♞f6
28. ♚e2 ♞h4

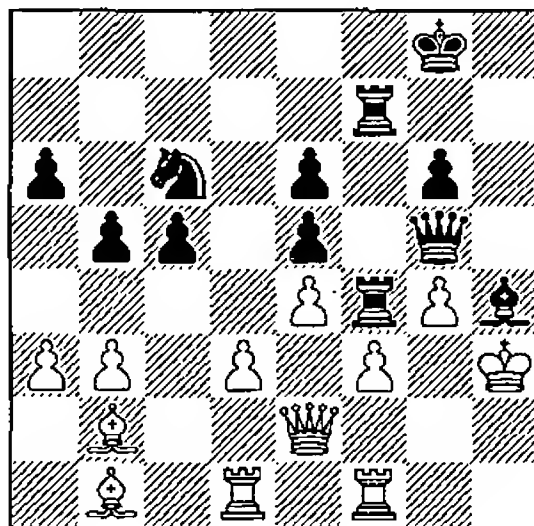
Now, according to our terminology, it is possible to say that the potential activity of the dark-squared bishop has been transformed into real activity. All the preparations for a decisive assault are complete and the next move begins the attack.

29. ♞b1 h5!
30. a3 hxg4
31. hxg4 ♚g5
32. ♞h3 ...

White takes measures to defend the g4-pawn, which was threatened by 32... ♜xf3 33. ♜xf3 ♚xg4+. On 32. ♞c1, one possibility is 32... ♞d4 33. ♞xf4 ♜xf4 34. ♚b2 ♞f3! 35. ♚h1 ♚xg4 36. ♚g2 ♚h5, and Black wins.

32... ♜8f7

52



The sorry position of White's pieces and the weakness of the dark squares in their camp doom them to defeat. But the further course of the game is very interesting in view of the magnificent

combination carried out by Chigorin on move 35.

33. ♖c1 ...

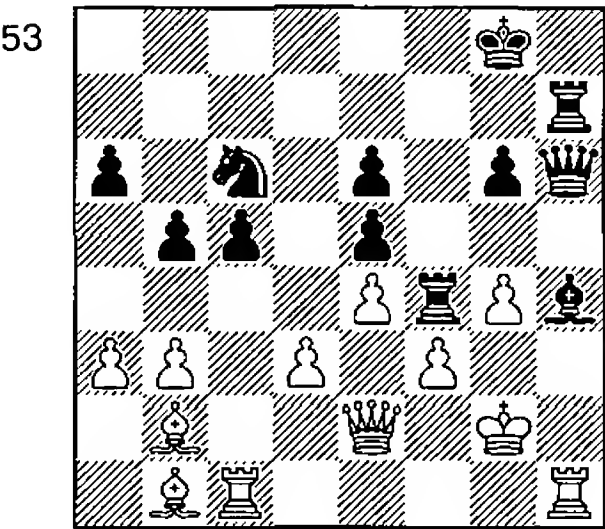
Black simply ignores this attempt at counterattack.

33... ♕h6

34. ♔g2 ♖h7

35. ♖h1 ...

This rook is obviously overloaded. Trying to prevent an invasion on the h-file, White misses the blow on the f-file.



35... ♖xf3!!

This rook sacrifice forces the win.

36. ♕xf3 ...

36. ♕xf3 loses to 36... ♕f4+ 37. ♔g2 ♕g3+ 38. ♔f1 ♖f7+.

36... ♕d2+

37. ♔g1 ...

Or 37. ♔f1 ♕xb2 with an irresistible attack.

37... ♖f2+!

38. ♔f1 ♖d4!!

The knight fulfills its destiny by striking the decisive blow.

39. ♖xd4 ♕xc1+

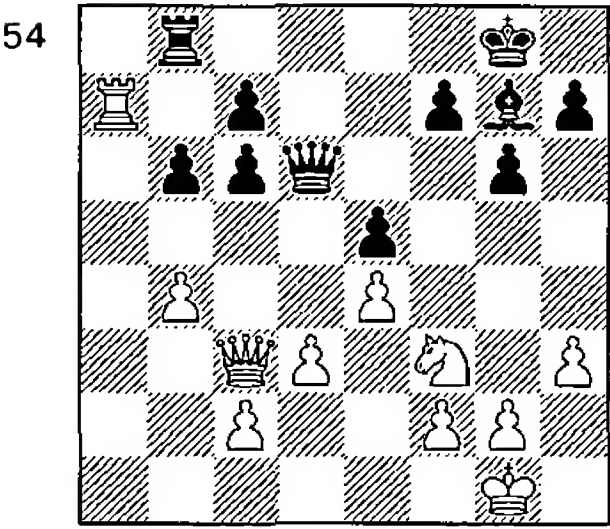
40. ♔e2 ♖xh1

41. ♖xf2 ♕xb1

42. g5 ♕f1+

0-1

No. 14: The Wrong Precaution



Q. Should Black choose a) 22...h6; or b) 22...♖c8?

22... h6?

This move was played in the game Ga-prindashvili–Teodorescu (Belgrade 1971). Black chose a bad time to create an escape square. Had she anticipated events, no doubt she would have selected ...♖b8-c8 to defend the c7-pawn and to prevent the maneuver that White carried out in the game. But now White will soon set up an outpost on d5 in addition to the strong position of the rook on the seventh rank.

23. b5! ...

White plays to deflect the c6-pawn from its position, thereby forcing the weakness of the point d5.

23... c5

Unfortunately for Black, it is bad to capture the pawn because of the major-piece invasion on c7.

24. ♖d2! ...

The white knight maneuvers to d5.

24... ♕d8

25. ♕a1 ...

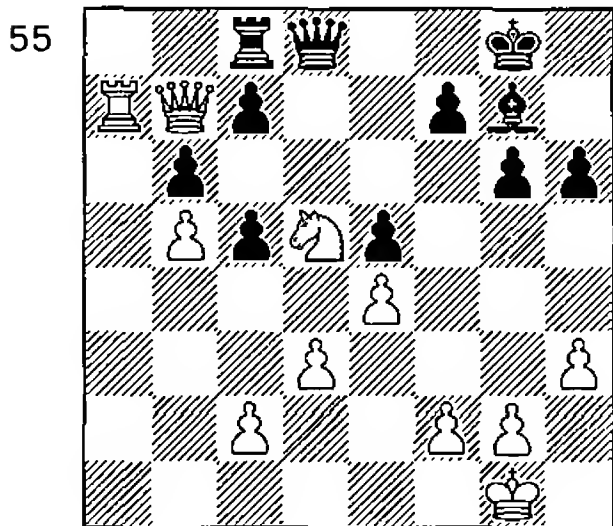
Having the initiative, it is necessary to be attentive and not give the opponent any chances. Now Black intended either

to trade rooks or to get the a-file back. But neither of these is part of White's plan. She needs the a-file, and exchanges will only simplify the defense for Black.

25... ♖c8
26. ♘c4 ♜e8
27. ♚a6 ♜d8

If 27... ♖b8, then 28. ♘e3 and the knight lands decisively on d5.

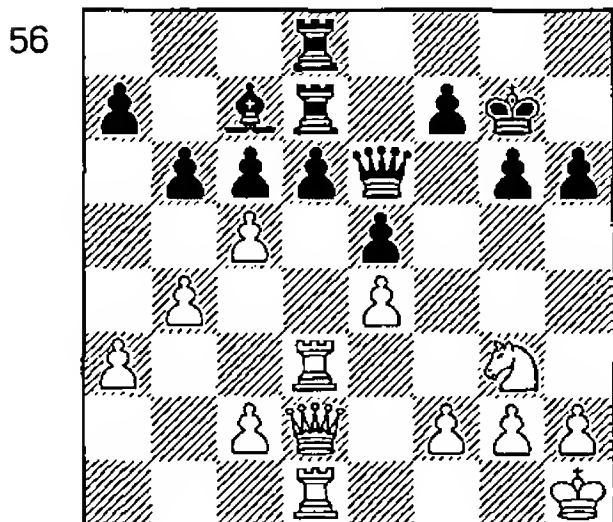
28. ♚b7 ♜e8
29. ♘e3 ♜d8
30. ♘d5 ...



Black resigned, as he loses at least the c7-pawn and further losses are inevitable. This was an excellent positional achievement by the women's world champion.

1-0

No. 15: Forced Elimination



Q. Show how White can win the d5 square.

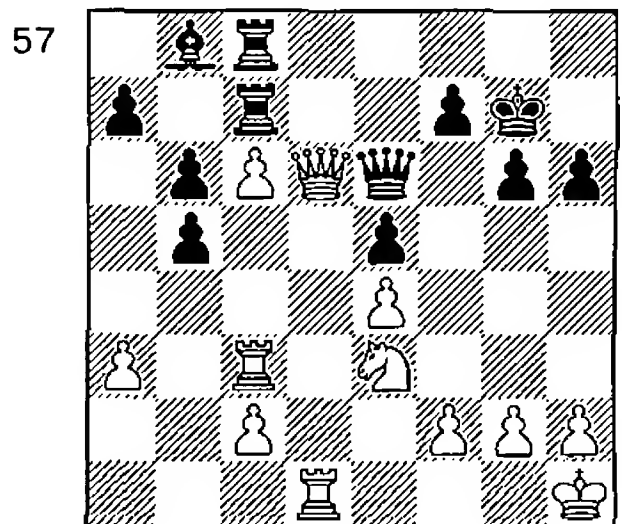
25. b5! ...

As a result of this small tactical operation in the game **Dydyshko—Veresov** (USSR 1971), White dominates the light squares in the opponent's camp and decides the fight in his favor. We have just observed a similar sacrifice in **Gaprindashvili—Teodorescu**.

25... cxb5

Black accepts the creation of a far advanced passed pawn for White, hoping to win it later. Therefore, he groups the rooks on the c-file.

26. c6 ♜e7
27. ♘f1 ♜b8
28. ♘e3 ♜c7
29. ♖c3 ♜dc8
30. ♚xd6 ...



White trusts in his own calculation and takes the pawn as though he is falling into the opponent's trap.

30... ♜xc6

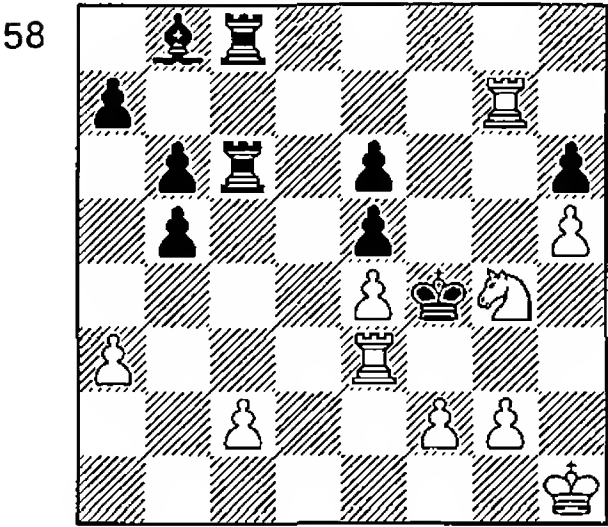
Black prepared this continuation in advance; however, he miscalculated. Now his king gets caught in a mating net.

31. ♚xe6 fxe6

32. ♖d7+ ♔f6

Retreating to the back rank is impossible because Black loses a piece after the exchange on c6 and the check with ♖d7-d8.

33. h4 g5
34. h5 g4
35. ♜xg4+ ♔g5
36. ♖g7+ ♔f4
37. ♖e3 ...



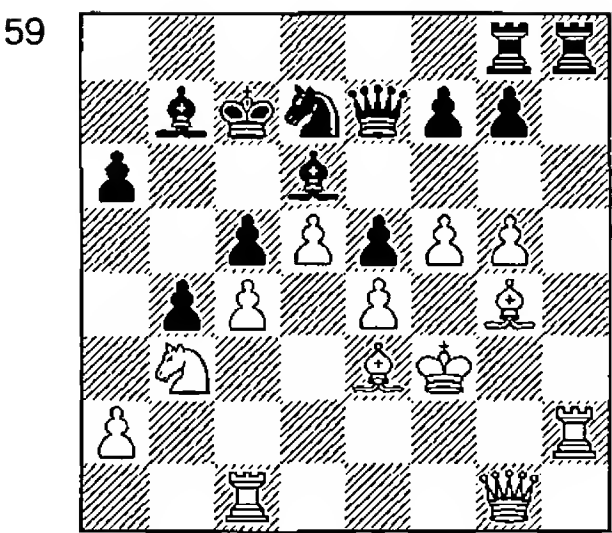
In this colorful situation all of White's pieces have pounced on the opponent's king and it can't be rescued. One might get the impression that White's attack occurred by chance, but this is not the case. White skillfully held the opponent's forces to the queenside and prepared the occupation of the seventh rank. In this game the knight didn't have time to occupy the central square d5; however, the threat alone was enough.

1-0

No. 16:
Exploiting a Space Advantage
(See Diagram 59)

Q. On what side of the board will the outcome be decided?

46. a3! ...



Previously in this game, White had attacked successfully on the kingside, and Black was compelled to evacuate the king to the queenside. But the monarch finds no peace there, either. Black's pawn advantage on the queenside is a factor only in the endgame. At the moment, Black's queenside defenses are weak, and White's move underscores that fact.

46... bxa3
47. ♖a2! ...

White no longer needs the h-file, so the major pieces are redeployed to the queenside. White's space advantage facilitates this. There is no helping Black. In the game **Karpov–Gligorić** (San Antonio 1972), White expertly cashed in on his positional advantage.

47... ♖h4
48. ♖xa3 ♖gh8
49. ♖b1 ♖b8
50. ♔e1! ♖xg4

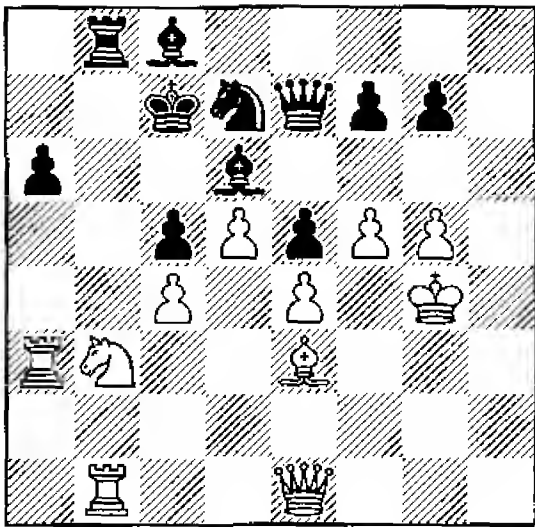
The pieces on the kingside play no part. 50... ♖hh8 51. ♔a5+ ♔c8 52. f6! gxf6 53. ♜xc5.

51. ♔xg4 ♜c8
(See Diagram 60)

52. ♔a5+ 1-0

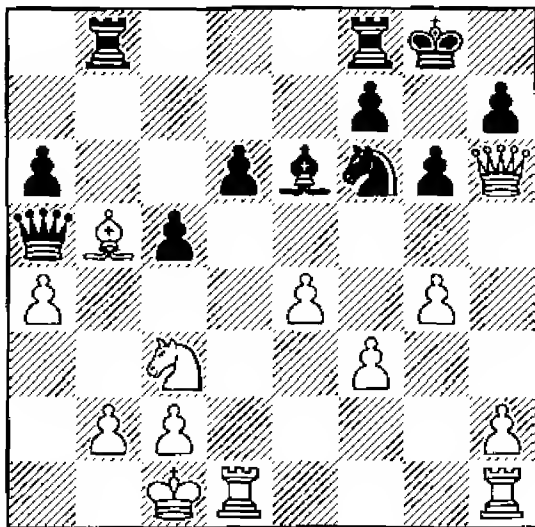
Black resigned in view of 52... ♖b6 53. ♜xc5 ♜xc5 54. ♖xb6.

60



No. 17: In Pursuit of the Hole

61



Q. Evaluate the diagram position and suggest a plan for White.

It is easy to see that the players have castled on opposite sides of the board; this usually presages a sharp fight. In the game **Makarichev–Tukmakov** (Palma de Mallorca 1989), Black had sacrificed a pawn to gain the initiative. However, White managed to exchange the dark-squared bishops and to occupy h6 with the queen. Thus, a closer examination indicates that White's position has enormous attacking potential. The f6 square is a gaping hole in Black's position. If the knight or a white pawn could occupy it, the battle would be concluded at once. This is the aim of White's further play.

17. ♖xd6 ...

The direct 17. e5 does not bring success. Black could answer 17...dxe5 18. g5 ♘h5 19. ♚e4 ♙h8 20. ♘f6 ♘xf6 21. gxf6 ♖g8. Therefore, it is necessary to operate more skillfully.

17... axb5

18. e5 ♘xg4!

The best defense. Very bad is 18...♙e8 19. ♙e4 f5 20. ♙g5 followed by 21. ♙xe6.

19. fxxg4 ♙b4!

Black takes control of the key square e4, and parries the main threats.

20. a5 ...

The attacker should always pay attention to the opponent's options for counterplay. Here White takes measures to secure the queenside.

20... ♙xg4

21. ♖e1 ...

Plunking the knight on f6 is White's only purpose.

21... ♙f5

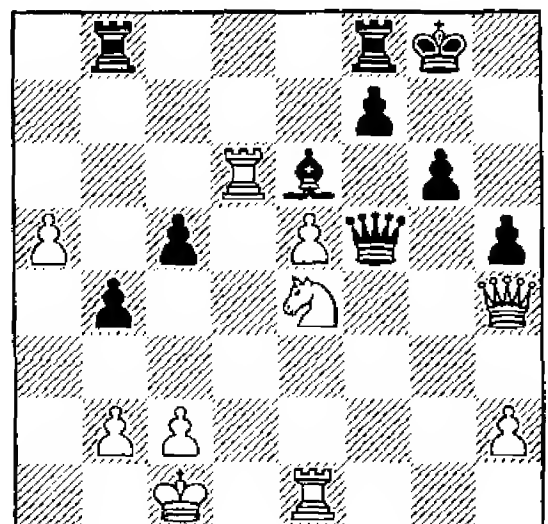
The exchange 21...♙h3 22. ♙xh3 leads to a difficult endgame for Black.

22. ♙h4 b4

Black couldn't make use of the e-5 pawn's vulnerability: 22...♙g7 23. ♙e4 ♙xe5? 24. ♙g5 ♙xd6 25. ♙xh7+ ♙f6 26. ♙e4+.

23. ♙e4 h5

62



24. ♖d2! ...

The threat to shift the rook to f2 forces Black to react.

24... ♔g7

25. ♕f6+ ...

White boldly offers to trade queens, because if Black takes, the knight maneuver (via the squares c5 and d7) transitions to a winning rook ending.

25... ♔h6

26. ♘xc5 ♖b5

27. ♘xe6 fxe6

28. ♕xf5 ♖xf5

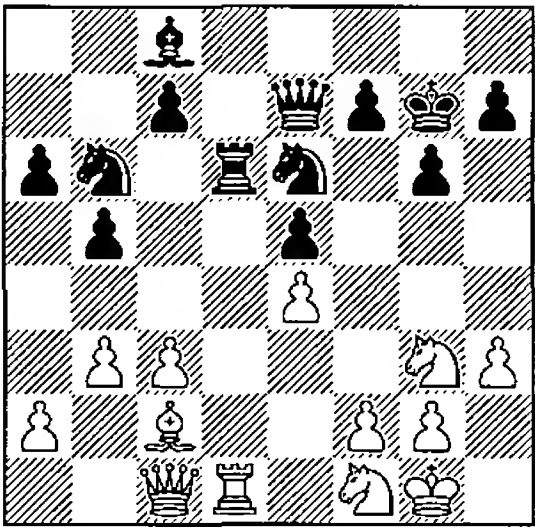
It is easy to see that Black didn't have the in-between move 28... ♖xa5. But the move played doesn't help.

29. a6 ♖fxe5 30. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 31. ♖d6 ♖g5 32. c4 ♖h4 33. ♖c2 ♖h3 34. ♖b3 ♖xh2 35. ♖xb4 ♖e1 36. a7 ♖a1 37. ♖d2 1-0

Black resigned because of 37... ♖h3(g3) 38. ♖d2-d3-a3; or 37... ♖gl 38. ♖d1+! ♖xd1 39. a8♖.

No. 18: The Squeeze

63



Q. Evaluate the diagram position with Black to move.

When examining the placement of the pieces in the game **Liberzon–Aver-**

bakh (Alma-Ata 1968), we can see that White's worst-placed man is the bishop on c2, and it is easy to imagine that it will remain blocked by its own pawns. The dark squares in White's camp (in particular the f4 square) are also weak. Black pursues a strategy of keeping White's pieces bottled up.

29... ♗f4

30. ♘e3 ...

Though Black's position is better, the win is still a long way away. White could count on continued defense after 30. ♖xd6 cxd6 (30... ♕xd6 31. ♕d2 h5 32. ♕xd6 cxd6 33. h4) 31. ♕e3 ♕c7 32. ♖d1.

30... h5

31. ♖xd6 ♕xd6

32. ♖f1 a5!

The dark squares are the main target in White's camp.

33. ♘e2 b4

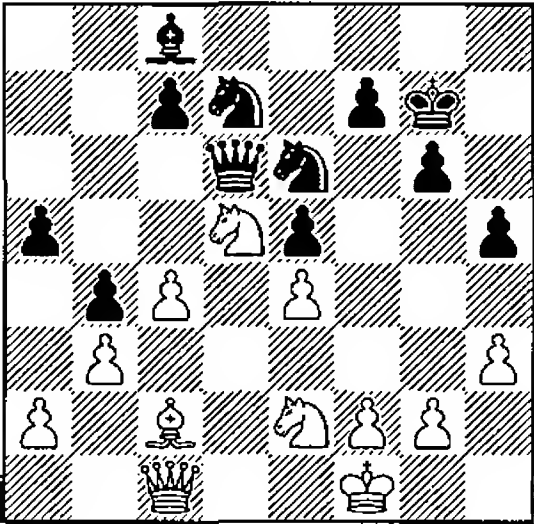
34. c4 ...

Worse is 34. ♘xf4 exf4 35. ♘d1 g5, and White has a hard time finding a move.

34... ♗e6

35. ♘d5 ♗d7

64



36. ♕b2? ...

The necessary move 36. ♕e1 would prevent an immediate invasion by

Black's pieces. Now White perishes quickly.

36... c6
37. ♖df4 ...

In case of 37. ♖e3, Black increases the pressure by 37... ♔d2.

37... ♖ec5

Black takes away squares from the white knight.

38. g3 ♖f6
39. h4 ♜fxe4

Black rejects 39...exf4 because of 40. e5.

40. ♙xe4 ♜xe4
41. f3 ♜c5
42. ♔g2 ...

If 42. ♖g2, then 42... ♔d1+ follows.

42... ♔f6
43. ♜h3 ♜d3
0-1

proved unsuccessful. It denies White any prospects for queenside play. Also, the point c4 is weakened, and, if it came to the endgame, then sooner or later a breakthrough in the center with ...d5-d4 would threaten White. White would have done better to play the developing move 20. ♔c2, when the position would be equal.

20... ♖g5
21. ♔e2 g6
22. ♙g4 ...

Retreating the bishop to c2 was preferable. Now the problems in the position become more complicated. First, exchanges favor Black; and second, his king's rook has something to do on the h-file.

22... ♙xg4
23. hxg4 ♜de6
24. ♔e3 h5!
25. ♖xg5 ...

Otherwise, Black could play 25. ♖h2 hxg4 26. ♖xg4 0-0-0 or simply 25... ♔a7, leading to a better endgame.

25... ♔xg5
26. ♔xg5 ♖xg5
27. gxh5 ...

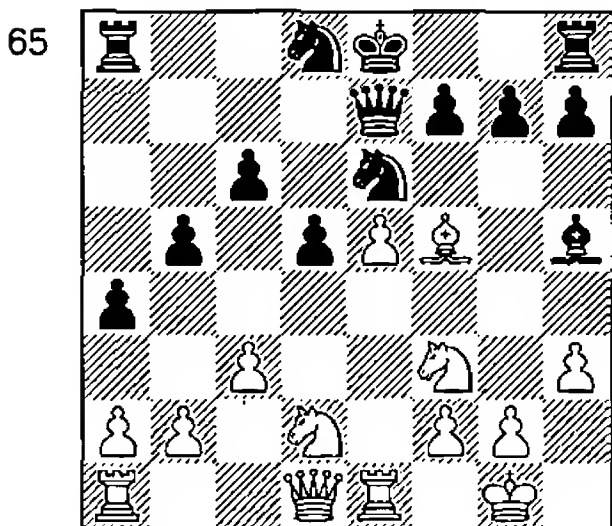
The active 27. f4 ♖e6 28. f5 ♖g7 does not work.

27. gxh5 ♜xh5
28. ♖f1 ♜h4
29. ♜ad1 ♔e7
30. f3 ♜e6
31. ♖e3 ♜d8
32. ♖g4 ♖g5

(See Diagram 66)

Black's positional superiority in the diagram position is obvious. White must constantly reckon with the breakthrough ...d5-d4, and the e5-pawn is a target. However, Black still has to work hard in order to win the full point.

No. 19: Killing Your Own Play

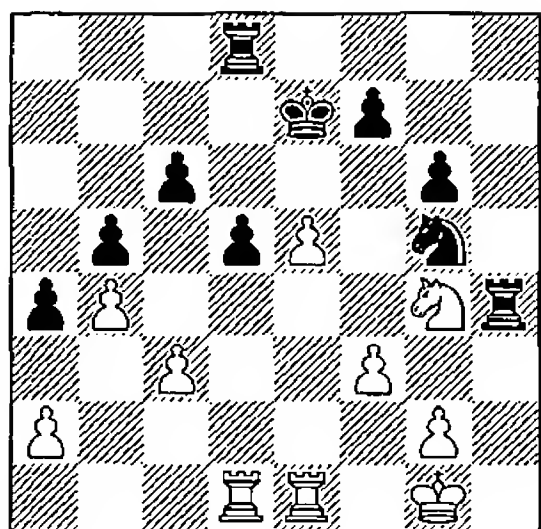


Q. In the diagram position, is 20. b4 a) a good move that gives White an advantage; or b) a mistake that worsens White's pawn structure?

20. b4? ...

In the game **Karpov—Korchnoi** (World Championship [28] 1978), this move

66



33. e3 e6

34. g4 g7

35. ♖e3 ...

It was better to centralize the king by

35. ♖f2.

35...  f5!

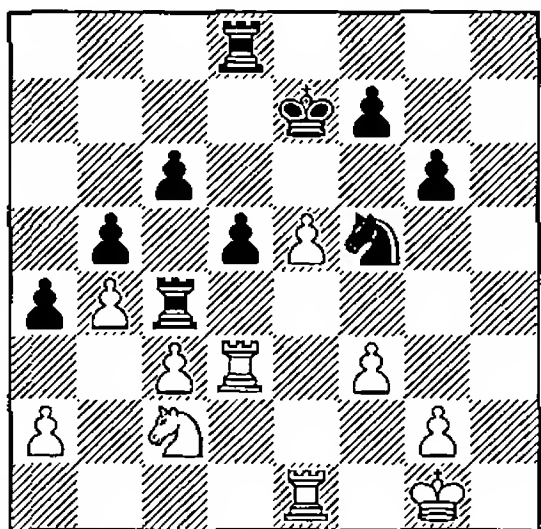
Black is not afraid of doubled pawns, because in this position they would be an asset. After 36. ♖xf5 gxf5, the black pawn will advance to f4 and, at the very least, the e5-pawn will be lost.

36. c2 c4

What can we do but recollect the ill-fated move 20. b4?!

37. ♖d3 ...








































67



37... d4!

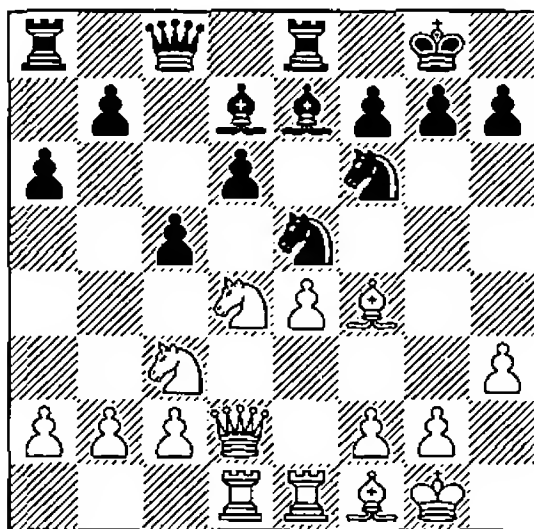
Black's plan is carried out just in time – the rook is located on the excellent

square c4 and the breakthrough ...d5-d4 has been achieved. The further course of the game is also very interesting.

38. g4 g7 39. xd4 e6 40. ed1
xd4 41. cxd4 xb4 42. f2 c5 43. d5
b2+ 44. g3 xa2 45. e3 b4 46. e6
a3 47. e2 fxe6 48. xe6+ f7 49.
de1 d7 50. b6 d3 51. ee6 3xd5
52. xg6 a3 53. bf6+ e7 54. e6+
f8 55. ef6+ e7 56. e6 d8 57.
a6 b7 58. g8+ c7 59. g7+ d7
60. g5 b3 61. xc5+ b8 0-1

No. 20: The Outpost on d5

68



Q. How should White react to the attack on the d4-knight?

14. ♖xe5! ...

In the game **Schlechter–Réti** (Vienna 1912), White discovered a flaw in Black's plan and achieved an advantage with accurate play. Withdrawing the knight to b3 was unpromising after 14... b5, when Black has counterplay.

14... dxe5

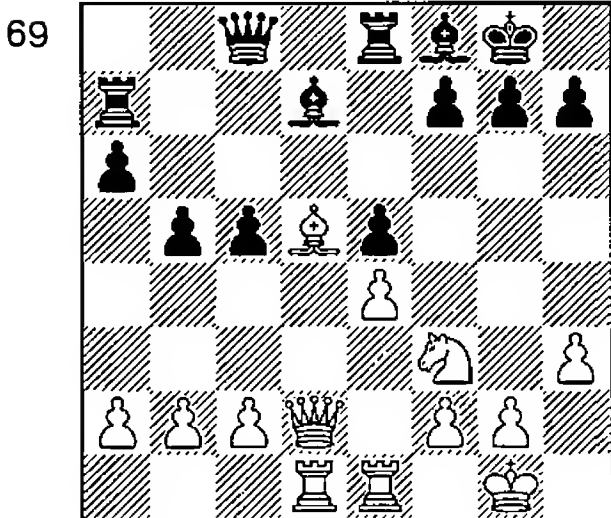
15. f3 f8

16. ♖c4! ...

16. d5 would be premature because of a possible blockade after 16...xd5

17. exd5 ♖d6 18. ♗g5 ♜c7. Schlechter aims for an edge with a good knight against the bad bishop on f8, as sooner or later Black will have to exchange minor pieces on d5.

16... b5
17. ♗d5 ♗xd5
18. ♖xd5 ♜a7



19. c4! ...

White fixes the c5-pawn and limits the opponent's dark-squared bishop even further.

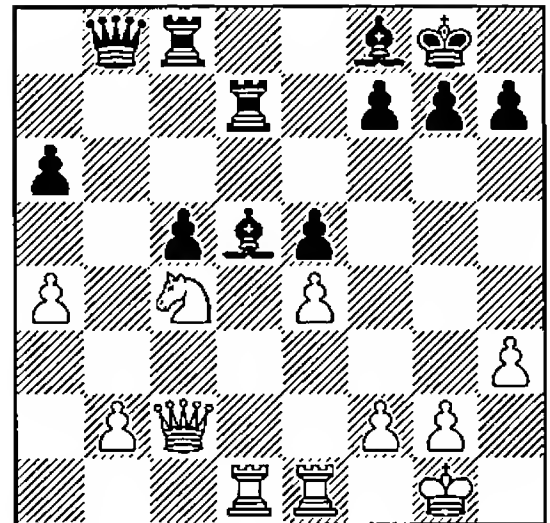
19... bxc4?

This move gives White an outpost square on c4, and only emphasizes the weakness of Black's pawns. The try 19... h6 would have been better in order to keep the white knight out of g5. If 19...b4, then White does best to play 20. ♗g5 in order to trade light-squared bishops! Black must then answer 20...♖c6 (worse is 20...♖e6 21. ♗xe6, when Black's position is in tatters), and with 21. ♖xc6 White transforms one kind of advantage into another. Here he controls the d-file and his knight is better than Black's bishop, which is hemmed in by its own pawns.

20. ♜c3 ♜b8
21. ♜xc4 ♖b5
22. ♜c2 ♜c8

23. a4 ♖c6
24. ♗d2 ♜d7
25. ♗c4 ♖xd5

70



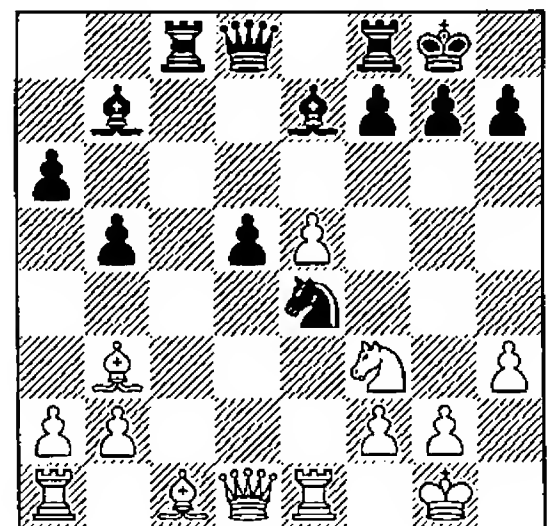
26. exd5 ...

Creating a passed pawn is the fastest way for White to make good on his advantage. Black finds himself in a difficult situation from which there does not appear to be any salvation.

26...♖d6 27. ♜f5 ♜dd8 28. ♗xe5 ♖xe5 29. ♜xe5 ♜b3 30. d6 ♜xa4 31. d7 ♜a8 32. ♜d5 h6 33. b3 ♜b5 34. ♜e7 ♜f8 35. ♜xf7 ♜fd8 36. ♜e7+ 1-0

No. 21: A Spirited Defense

71



Q. Evaluate the diagram position with White to move.

White has a positional advantage because the isolated d5-pawn is weak, Black's light-squared bishop is passive, and White has the excellent blockading square d4. Taking all this into account, White, in the game **Aronin—Saigin** (USSR 1960), played:

19. ♖d4! ♜h8

With this move Black plans to advance the f-pawn. It was necessary to move the king first because of the pin along the a2-g8 diagonal. However, now White gets more time to bring the reserves into the battle.

20. ♔g4 ♙c5

Black plays actively and does not resign himself to passive defense. The bishop's move is connected with Black's subsequent combination. Black strives to activate his pieces as much as possible and, if he gets the chance, to attack f2. However, White has ensured that he is fully prepared for the coming complications.

21. ♗e3 ♔b6

22. ♖ad1 ♖ce8

23. ♘f3 ...

For White's full domination over d4, it is expedient to trade off the dark-squared bishops. Incidentally, 23. ♘f5 doesn't work because of 23...g6, when White loses the pawn.

23... f5

24. ♔h4 ...

The natural 24. ♔h5 fails to 24... ♘xf2, and if 25. ♔xf2, then 25...♙xe3+ 26. ♖xe3 f4.

24... d4

An important move: Black correctly decides to enter into complications. However, his plan has a flaw.

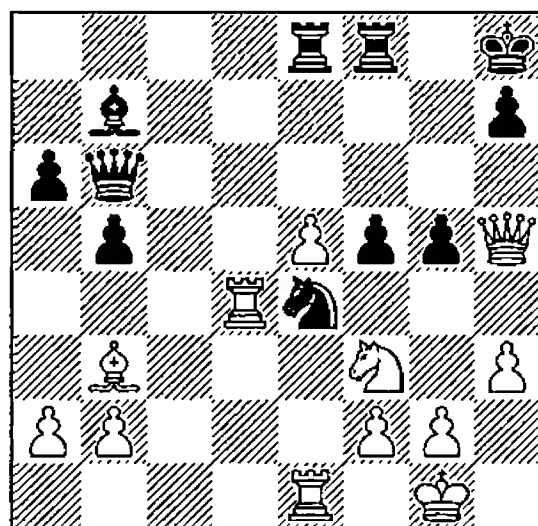
25. ♙xd4 ♙xd4

26. ♖xd4 g5

The purpose of Black's sacrifice becomes clear: it is impossible to take the g5-pawn as the d4-rook becomes vulnerable, which forces the white queen to retreat.

27. ♔h5 ...

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27... ♗f6

Black's position looks menacing. But White's pieces are very active and they are all pointing at the airy position of the enemy king. Not surprisingly, White has ideas of his own.

28. ♔h6 ♙xf3

The white rook may be *en prise*, but it is destined to strike the decisive blow.

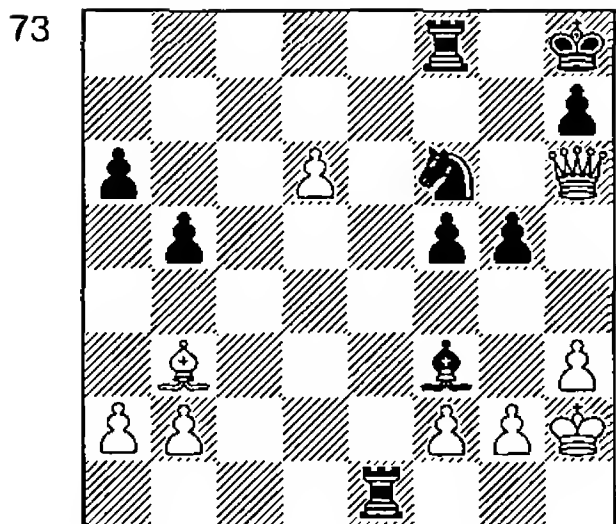
29. ♖d6! ♔xd6

Black would seem to receive adequate compensation for the queen, but only temporarily. If the queen retreats to a5, the following beautiful variation leads to a win: 30. exf6! ♔xe1+ 31. ♔h2 ♔e5+ 32. g3 ♖g8 33. ♖d7.

30. exd6 ♖xe1+

31. ♔h2 ...

It turns out that Black cannot keep all his extra material, as both the rook and the bishop are loose. Meanwhile, White still has enough forces to generate a decisive attack.



31... ♖ee8
 32. gxf3 ♘d7
 33. ♔xg5 ...

If Black could win the d-pawn, he would be doing very well, but this is not possible. White's queen is incredibly active and pins down all the opponent's pieces. The black rooks are helpless.

33... ♖f6
 34. ♔d2 ♘e5
 35. ♔d5 ...

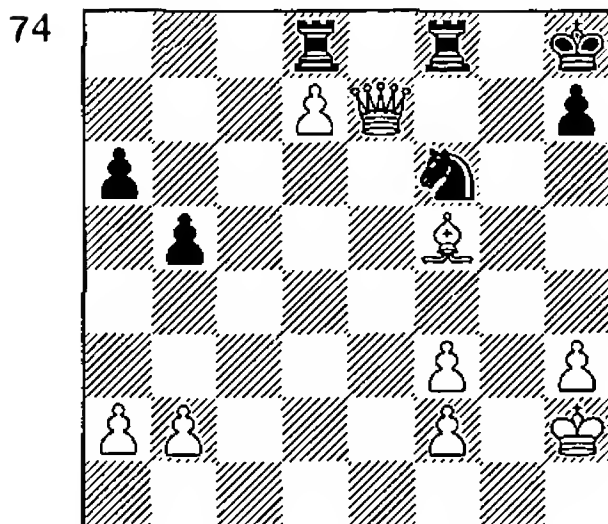
White threatens 36. d7, so the knight has to return whence it came.

35... ♘d7
 36. ♔c6 ♖d8
 37. ♔c7 ♖f8
 38. ♙e6 ♘f6
 39. ♙xf5 ...

The last several moves were all forced and White obviously has a superior position.

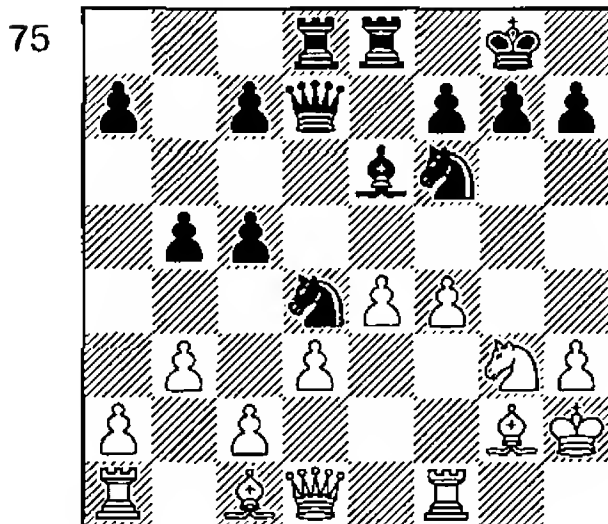
39... ♖g8
 40. ♔e7 ♖gf8
 41. d7 ...

This tragicomic position deserves a diagram 74. Black is helpless against the threat of White's transferring his king to c7. White only needs to be careful not to step into any knight forks during the king's march. However, Black chose to



resign rather than witness the execution of this plan.

No. 22: Unnecessary Self-Weakening



Q. In the game Lim--Popova (Moscow 1972), White threatens to win a piece by 16. f5. Is 15...g6 an adequate defense?

15... g6?

This careless advance weakens the dark squares in Black's camp. As a result, the f6-knight loses its support and the attempt to defend it with the queen leads to ruin.

16. f5! gxf5
 17. ♙g5 ♔e7
 18. ♙h1 ...

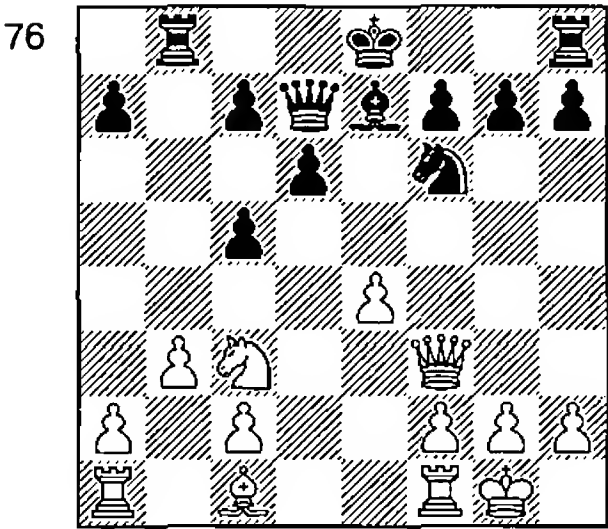
This is the most rational move. It doesn't make sense for White to consider variations with ... ♘g4+.

- 18... ♙d6
19. e5! ♙xe5
20. ♖f4 ...

White's material advantage is now sufficient for victory.

- 20... ♙d5 21. ♖xd5 ♖xd5+ 22. ♔h2
- h5 23. ♜f2 h4 24. ♘h5 ♘f3+ 25. ♙f3 1-0

No. 23: Prevent the Trades Your Opponent Needs



Q. Black can play 13...0-0 here. Is this a good move?

- 13... 0-0?

Black needs to keep the light squares under control, since they have been weakened by the exchange of light-squared bishops and the advance of the pawn to c5. Ideally this task belongs to the knight; therefore, it is necessary to avoid its exchange for as long as possible. Otherwise, ...c7-c6 would be needed to control d5, but this would badly weaken d6. Furthermore, the move ...g7-g6, to defend f5, will create a new weakness in the position.

From this viewpoint, Black's last move is inaccurate. It would be useful

to prevent White from exchanging the bishop for the knight by the simple 13... h6. The brief delay of the king in the center is of no consequence.

14. ♖g5 ...

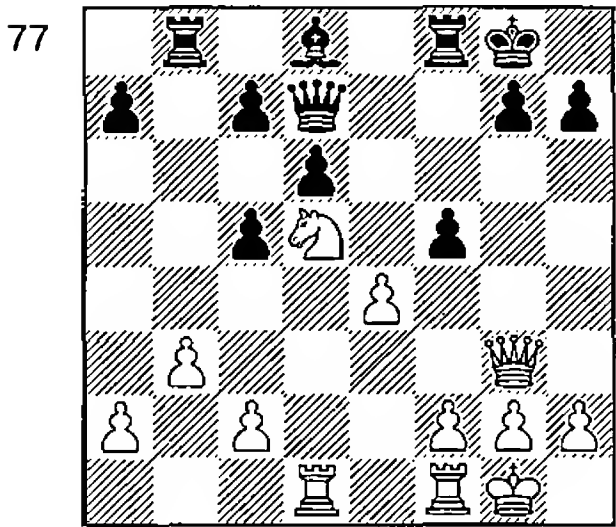
In the game **Levenfish–Dubinin** (USSR Championship 1934), White pursues his plan consistently. Though he cannot yet take the knight because of the weakness of the a1–h8 diagonal, after 15. ♜ad1 the exchange becomes an unpleasant threat.

- 14 ... ♘d5?

Black acquiesces to the opponent's aims. A better move with the knight was 14... ♘e8 when after 15. ♖xe7 ♙xe7 16. ♘d5 ♙e6 Black can defend by keeping in reserve the possibility of ...c7-c6 and bringing the king's rook into play with ...f7-f6 and ...♜f8-f7. In this way, the knight would play an important role by covering the points c7, d6, and g7.

There was also another way to counteract White's plan: 14...h6, and if 15. ♖h4, then 15...g5 16. ♖g3 ♜fe8. The drawback of this line lies in the weakening of Black's kingside (especially f5), but in return he would have a target for attack — the center pawn on e4.

15. ♘xd5 ♖xg5
16. ♙g3 ♖d8
17. ♜ad1 f5?

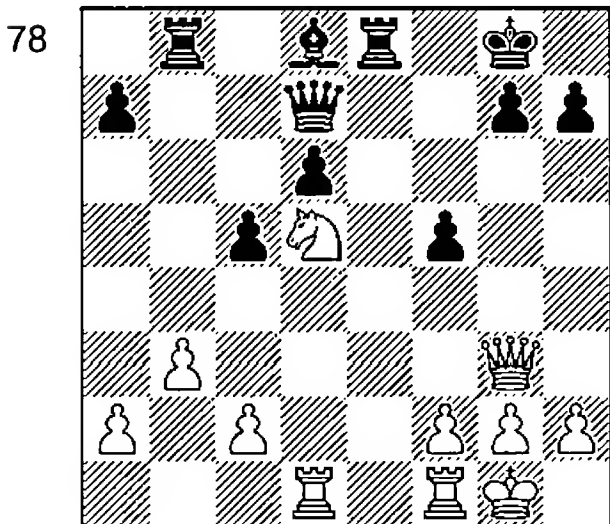


Another error; as Tartakover once said, "Chess is a fairy tale of 1,001 blunders." However, after 17...c6 18. ♖e3 the weakness on d6 is irreparable. On the other hand, it is difficult to develop the game without ...c7-c6 as White's knight occupies the strong outpost on d5 and restricts Black's position.

18. e5! ♖e8

Even now 18...c6 19. ♘f6+ ♙xf6 20. ♖xd6 ♚c7 21. exf6 ♖xf6 22. ♖xf6, while bad for Black, was the lesser evil.

19. exd6 cxd6



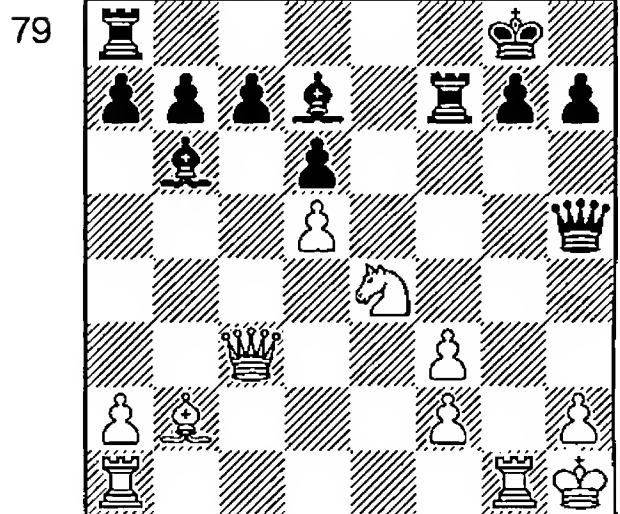
Now White is poised to make good the advantage provided by the powerful centralized knight, by launching an attack against the black king.

20. ♖fe1 ♖e6 21. ♘f4 ♖xe1+ 22. ♖xe1 ♙a5 23. ♘d5 ♙d8 24. h4 ♖b7 25. c4 ♚f7 26. ♚f3 ♙g8 27. ♚e2 g6 28. h5 ♚f8 29. h6 ♙g5 30. ♚b2 ♙g8 31. f4 ♙d8 32. ♘f6+ ♙xf6 33. ♖xf6 d5?

Doubtlessly this was induced by time pressure, but the outcome of the game would have been the same, as Black is in *Zugzwang*. One possibility is 33...a6 34. ♖e6 ♖b6 35. ♖e8+ ♚xe8 36. ♚g7#.

34. cxd5 1-0

No. 24: Deflection Sacrifice to Seize a Square



Q. Whose attack will hit first?

In the game **Winawer—Chigorin** (Warsaw 1882), White has strong pressure on the a1-h8 diagonal and up the open g-file, plus his knight occupies an important central position. In turn, Black has the f-file and the diagonals a7-g1 and c8-h3.

White aspires both to defend the weak point f3 and to attack g7. Nevertheless, the weakness of f3 tips the evaluation of the position in Black's favor. Black focuses all his forces on capturing this point, and the presence of the bishop pair helps considerably to that end. The answer to our question quickly becomes clear.

22... ♙d4!
23. ♚xd4 ♚xf3+
24. ♖g2 ♙h3
25. ♖ag1 ♖e8!

Black attacks the new weak point at e4 to either win the knight or capture the e-file.

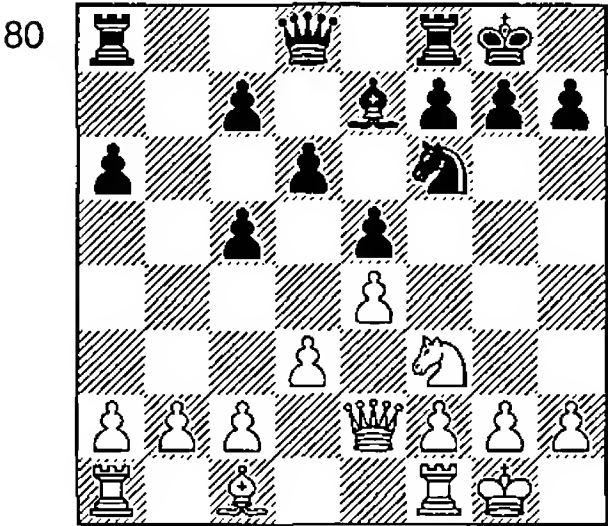
26. ♚c3 ...

White defends e1. Its weakness is the reason that 26. ♘g5 ♙xg2+ 27. ♖xg2 ♖e1# is impossible.

26... ♖xg2+
27. ♖xg2 ♖xe4
28. ♖xf3 ♖e1+
0-1

This game is an excellent example of the ability to find or create weak points in the opponent's position and to attack them by all available means. If White could have protected f3 by ♖g1-g3, then the position would favored White.

No. 25: Exposing the Rear Pawn



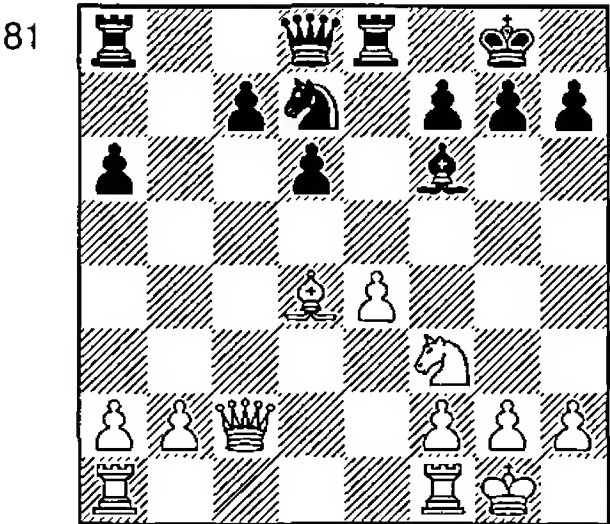
Q. White can play 13. c3. Is this move a) right, leading to an advantage; or b) wrong?

13. c3 ...

In his *International Chess Magazine*, Steinitz wrote of this move, “We would prefer to postpone this maneuver until the knight is transferred via d2 and c4 on e3.” It is very interesting to note that the decision of how to play here is a matter of temperament, and Steinitz’s recommendation is typical of his unhurried and circumspect style. The course of the game confirms that White’s continuation aims to exploit

the defects in Black’s position as quickly as possible.

13.... ♖d7
14. d4 exd4
15. c3xd4 ♖f6
16. ♖e3 cxd4
17. ♖xd4 ♖e8
18. ♖c2 ...



Now the success of White’s operation in **Tarrasch–Berger** (Breslau 1889) is obvious: White pressures the c7-pawn along the open file.

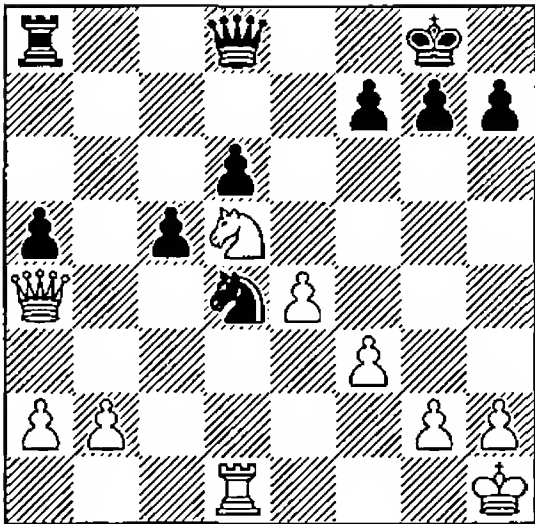
18... ♖xd4 19. ♖xd4 ♖c5 20. f3 ♖f6
21. ♖fd1 ♖eb8 22. ♖ab1 a5 23. ♖h1
♖b6 24. ♖e2 ♖e6 25. ♖c3 ♖c6 26.
♖a4 ♖c5 27. ♖d5 ♖d8 28. ♖bc1 ♖xc1
29. ♖xc1 c5

If the knight played to c5, it would be undermined by the advance e4-e5.

30. ♖d1 ♖d4

Black tries to shield the pawn with his knight, but White only needs to trade knights to reopen the d-file. Then at the right moment he will attack the d6-pawn with the major pieces as well as with the e-pawn and the point should fall. In general, this is White’s plan, but of course that can change depending on circumstances.

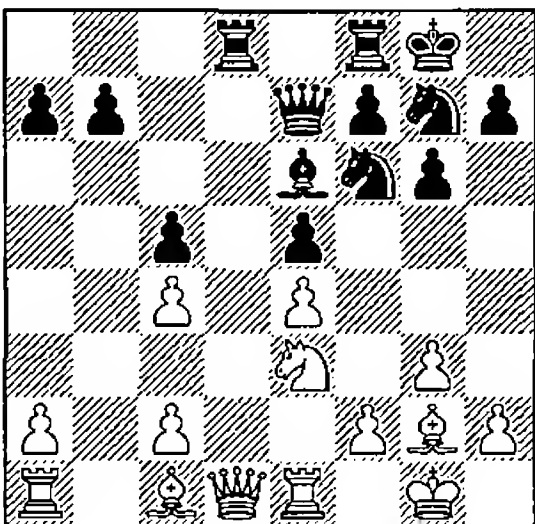
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31. ♖c4 ♜b8 32. b3 ♜c8 33. ♜xd4 cxd4 34. ♞e7+ ♜xe7 35. ♜xc8+ ♜f8 36. ♜xf8+ ♜f8 37. ♜g1 ♞e7 38. ♜f2 d5 39. e5 ♞e6 40. ♞e2 ♞xe5 41. ♞d3 h5 42. a3 h4 43. h4 axb4 44. axh4 ♞d6 45. ♞xd4 ♜c6 46. b5+ ♜xb5 47. ♜xd5 ♞h4 48. ♞d4 ♞b5 49. ♞e5 ♜c4 50. ♜f4 ♞d4 51. ♜g4 ♞e5 52. ♞xh4 ♜f4 53. ♜h5 ♜f5 54. g3 ♜f6 55. ♞g4 ♜g6 56. ♜f4 ♜f6 57. ♞e4 ♜e6 58. ♞d4 ♜d6 59. ♜c4 ♜c6 60. f4 ♜d6 61. ♜d4 ♜e6 62. ♞c5 ♞e7 63. ♜d5 ♞d7 64. ♞e5 ♞e7 65. f5 f6+ 66. ♞d5 ♜d7 67. h3 ♞e7 68. ♞c6 ♞e8 69. h4 ♞e7 70. ♞c7 ♜e8 71. ♞d6 ♞d8 72. ♞e6 ♞e8 73. h5 ♜f8 74. h6 1-0

No. 26: It's Not a Weakness if Your Opponent Can't Exploit It, Part I

83



Q. Evaluate the move 20. ♞d5.

At first glance, White seems to have the worse position in the game **Botvinnik–Panov** (USSR Championship 1939) because of his damaged pawn structure. This would definitely be the case if it were an ending, but we are at the height of the middlegame and the evaluation is affected radically. We must remember that something is weak only if the opponent can take advantage of it.

Despite White's considerable pawn weaknesses, Black's position is very difficult. Botvinnik's army works together to control the key square d5, the isolated c4-pawn closely cooperates with the e3-knight, and should Black occupy d4, the c2-pawn will be called into action.

Also, notice that the dark-squared bishop can be developed to pressure the main diagonal a1-h8, and that White's knight is stronger than Black's minor pieces. Thus, there is no reason to rush to exchange it. In case of 20. ♞d5 ♞xd5 21. cxd5 ♞d7 Black can then blockade the d5-pawn by ...♞g7-e8-d6. Therefore, White's first move becomes clearer.

20. ♜e2! ...

White shows a deep understanding of the strategic features of the position.

20... ♞d7

21. ♞b2 f6

22. f4 ♜de8

23. ♜ad1 b6

24. ♜d2 exf4

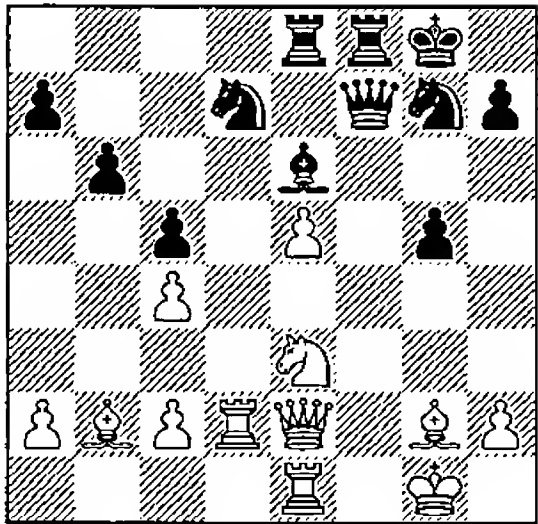
White threatened ♜ed1 and ♞g4, so Black makes a desperate attempt to ease the pressure and capture the e5 square.

25. gxf4 g5

26. fxg5 fxg5

27. e5! ♜f7

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28. ♖d5! ...

Only now! The knight’s occupation of the central point is carried out with decisive effect. Now 28...♗xd5 is bad in view of 29. cxd5 with two connected passed pawns in the center. The outcome of the battle is determined.

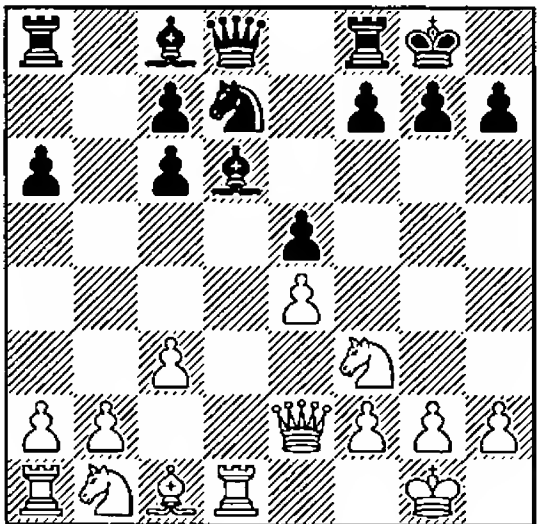
28... ♗h5
29. ♜f1 ♖f4
30. ♚e4 ♗f5
31. ♜xf5 ♗xf5

Leads to the loss of material, but Black is also defeated following 31...♜xf5 32. ♖c7.

32. ♖xf4 gxf4 33. ♗d5+ ♜g7 34. e6 ♖f6 35. ♜xf4 ♜g6 36. ♜g2+ ♖g4 37. ♜gxg4+ ♗xg4 38. ♜xg4+ ♜f5 39. ♜g3 ♜g8 40. ♗g7 ♜e7 41. ♗f8 1-0

No. 27: Doubled Pawns Aren’t Necessarily Bad!

85



Q. White can play 12. c4 here. Is this continuation a) good, or b) a mistake?

Inexperienced players who are aware of the drawbacks of doubled pawns will often go to great lengths to avoid their formation, but the issue is not so clearcut. Doubled pawns are often compensated by positional benefits such as open files, the bishop pair, control over strategically important squares, or open lines for attack. We saw evidence of this in Ljublin-sky–Botvinnik.

Thus, in the game Dzindzichashvili–Faibisovich (USSR Young Masters Tournament, Dubna 1970), Black has courageously worsened his pawn structure, and his opponent met him halfway.

12. c4? ...

In his book *Three Hundred Chess Games*, German grandmaster Siegbert Tarrasch wrote that, “it is not enough to be a good player; you must also play well.” Clearly, Dzindzichashvili was already a good player, but here he did not play well. White’s last move badly weakened his control of d4, and Black begins to fight for the center at once.

12... ♜e7
13. ♖c3 ♜b8
14. b3 ♖c5

Black maneuvers the knight to d4 via c5 and e6. This is typical in similar positions arising from Indian systems.

15. h3 ...

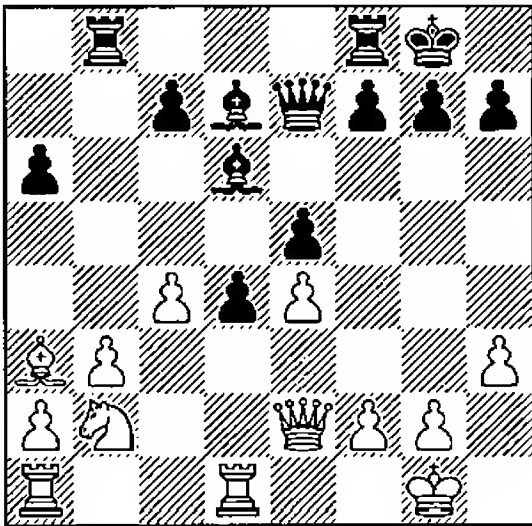
White is compelled to prevent Black’s light-squared bishop from exchanging itself for the knight on f3, which would thereby weaken d4.

15... ♗e6
16. ♖a4 ...

White takes defensive measures by preparing to transfer the knight via a4-b2-d3. Considering the inevitable appearance of a black pawn on d4, this blockade square will be best for the knight.

16... c5
17. ♖a3 ♙d7
18. ♘b2 ♜d4
19. ♘xd4 cxd4

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Black has improved his pawn structure by forcing White into an exchange on d4, and Black will also benefit from the coming exchange on d6, which will trade off his bad bishop. Meanwhile, White's inaccuracies are building up, and the experienced master Faibisovich will soon be rewarded for his diligence with a point on the scoreboard.

20. ♙xd6 ♜xd6
21. ♘d3 c5

Black has formed a pawn wedge in the center and the focus of the battle moves to the kingside where Black is preparing to open the game by ...f7-f5.

22. f4 exf4
23. e5 ...

As White does not wish to passively await his fate, he tries to seize the initiative. However, as often happens, this only

leads to the creation of new weaknesses (the e5-pawn) and to the strengthening of the opponent's initiative.

23... ♙e7
24. ♜xf4 ♜be8
25. ♜d3 ♙f5
26. ♜e1 f6

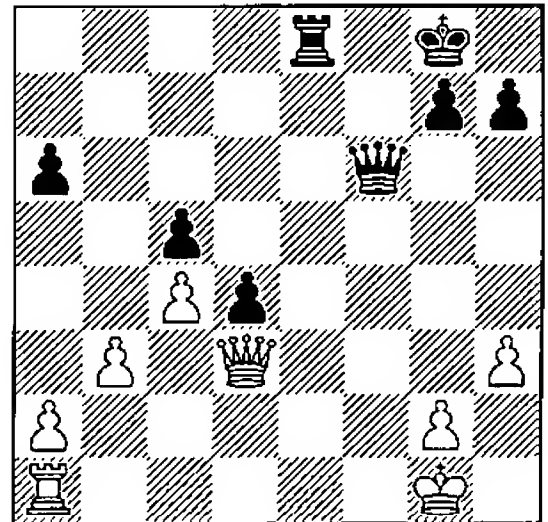
Black could win the e5-pawn with ...♙c7. Instead, he prefers to use the open e- and d-files for his major pieces. The initiative belongs to Black, and White's moves are forced.

27. ♙d2 ♙xd3
28. exf6 ♙xf6
29. ♜xe8 ...

Alas, White cannot retain control of the e-file because of the threat of check on f2.

29... ♜xe8
30. ♙xd3 ...

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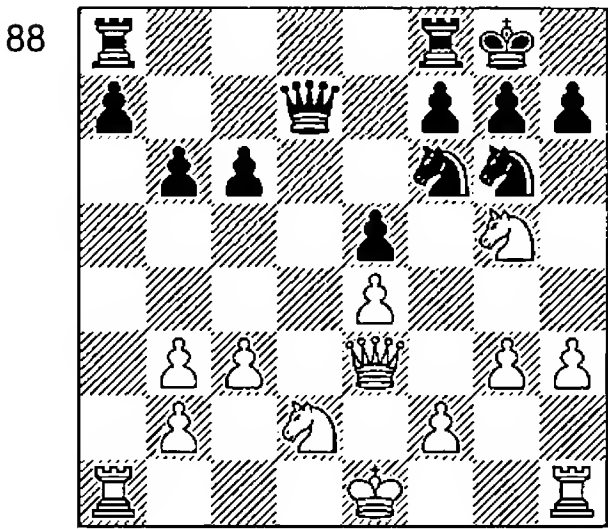


Although fewer pieces are left on the board, Black's initiative is palpable. He can use the outpost on c3 to create direct threats to the white king. When White's forces are diverted to defend the king, Black will use the passed d-pawn to end the fight.

30... ♙e3 31. ♙d2 ♙e5 32. ♜f1 ♜e2
33. ♙a5 ♙e3+ 34. ♙h1 ♙g5 35. ♜gl
d3 36. ♙xa6 h5 37. ♙a8+ ♙h7 38. ♙f3

♖e3 39. ♔f2 ♚e5 40. ♜f1 ♜e2 41. ♚f3 d2 0-1

No. 28: It's Not a Weakness if Your Opponent Can't Exploit It, Part II



Q. Evaluate the consequences of 17... c5.

17... c5

In Gunsberg–Steinitz (World Championship Match [10] 1891), Black no doubt realized that this move weakened the d5 square, but he also saw that White cannot take advantage of it, and he likely understood the future benefits of fixing the b3-pawn.

18. ♘gf3 ...

It is dangerous to castle on the queen-side because of the immediate pawn attack ...a7-a5-a4.

18... ♜ad8

19. ♘c4 ...

19. 0-0 is no good in view of 19... ♚xh3 20. ♜xa7 ♘g4, and after 21. ♚e2 there comes 21... ♘f4! 22. gxf4 ♜d6.

19... ♜fe8

20. ♘cd2 ...

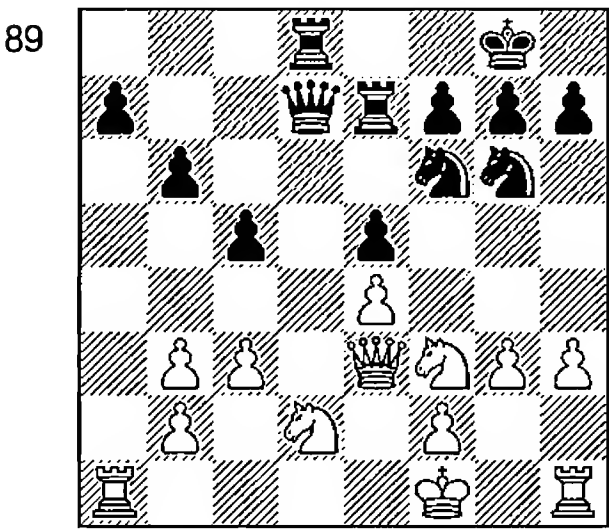
White's aimless knight maneuvers indicate that he has lost his bearings in

the position. White should immediately begin to transfer the king to h2.

20... ♜e7

21. ♚f1 ...

Gunsberg tries to safeguard the king and connect his rooks.



21... h5!

Steinitz postulated the theory that the player who has the initiative is obligated to attack or else lose that initiative. Black's chosen method has become standard today: he seeks to create new weaknesses in White's position.

The fact of the matter is that, despite Black's indubitable advantage, White's weaknesses on e4 and b3 are reliably defended. After the king reaches g2, Gunsberg can gradually neutralize the pressure on the d-file and simplify the position. It is then that the weakness of d5 will come into play.

22. ♚g2 ...

There is nothing better. After 22. h4, Black can use the hole on g4 and develop activity by means of 22... ♘g4 23. ♚e2 ♜f8, followed by the advance of the f-pawn.

22... h4

The straightforward continuation. Black intends to loosen the white king's

pawn cover and to clear h5 for his knight. If this can be achieved, White will have to reckon constantly with the threat of a typical combination beginning with the moves ... ♖h5-f4+ or ... ♖g6-f4+.

23. ♔h2 ...

White has no definite plan, so he takes preventive measures. The king moves so that the knight will not go to f4 with check.

23... ♚b5!

Limiting play to the kingside does not promise success yet: 23... ♖h5 24. ♚g5!. So Black plans to regroup his forces — the queen maneuvers to c6, the rooks will be doubled on the d-file, and as circumstances allow he will play ... ♖f6-h5, ... ♚c6-f6, etc. First, it is useful for Black to compel the move c3-c4.

24. c4 ...

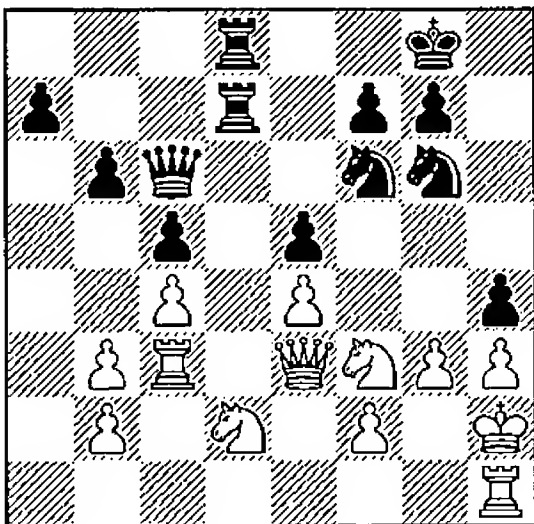
White is forced into making another positional concession. Now the d4 square is weak, too.

24... ♚c6

25. ♖ac1 ♚ed7

26. ♖c3 ...

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26... ♖h5!

Black doesn't rush into trading pawns. This is useful both psychologi-

cally and positionally, as the f2-pawn hinders the mobility of White's pieces. In particular, they can't use the f-file or the second rank.

27. ♖g1 ...

27. ♚g5 does not threaten Black because of 27... ♚f6, when White has nothing better than to retreat, as all other variations lead to undesirable results: 28. ♚xh5 ♖xd2; 28. ♖f1 hxg3+ 29. fxg3 ♚xg5 30. ♖xg5 ♖d3 31. ♖g1 ♖xc3 32. bxc3 ♖d3; 28. ♚xf6 hxg3+ 29. fxg3+ ♖xd2+.

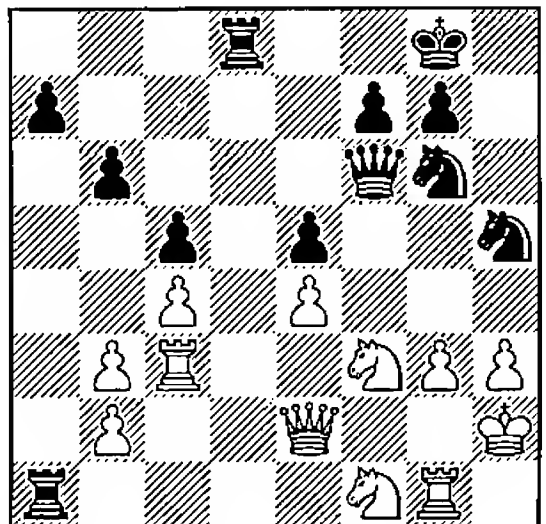
27... ♚f6

28. ♖f1 ♖d1

29. ♚e2 hxg3+

30. fxg3 ♖a1

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Black's advantage is evident. He controls the d-file, and White's pieces are forced to defend its entry points. White's pawns are weak and vulnerable to blows on both the queenside and the kingside. The king's cover is obviously inadequate. The second rank is weak. In addition, Black holds the initiative, and threatens to double his rooks on the first rank.

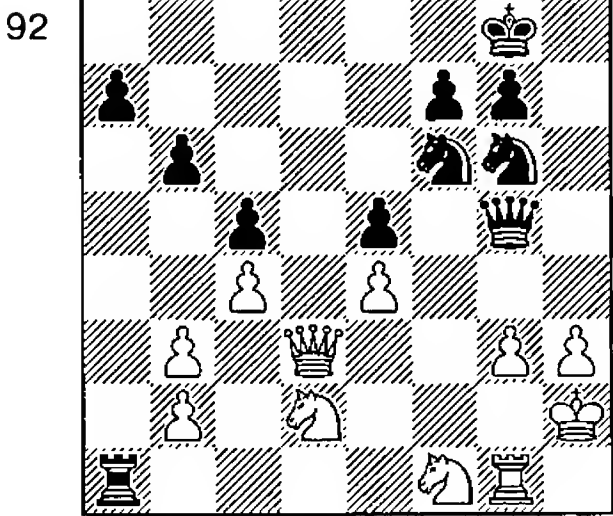
If White tries to exchange a pair of rooks by means of 31. ♖d3, Black can play 31... ♖xd3 32. ♚xd3 a6 with the

idea of putting White in *Zugzwang*. White also experiences difficulties trying to trade rooks on the second rank: 31. ♖c2 ♜e7 32. ♖d2 ♖xd2 33. ♜1xd2 ♖xg1 34. ♜xg1 ♔g5.

The reader may wish to explore on his own why 31. ♜e3 is unsatisfactory as well. White's possibilities are not exhausted by the above variations, but it is not the intent of this book to enter into lengthy and complex analyses. Better to leave this to the next stage of chess development.

31. ♜3d2
32. ♖f3?
33. ♖d3 ♖e8,
- even though Black gets to keep the initiative. In all variations, White has to reckon with a threat to the e4-pawn, with tactical possibilities in connection with ...♜hf4 or ...♜gf4 and the penetration of the black queen.

- 32... ♜f6
33. ♖d3 ♖xd3
34. ♔xd3 ...

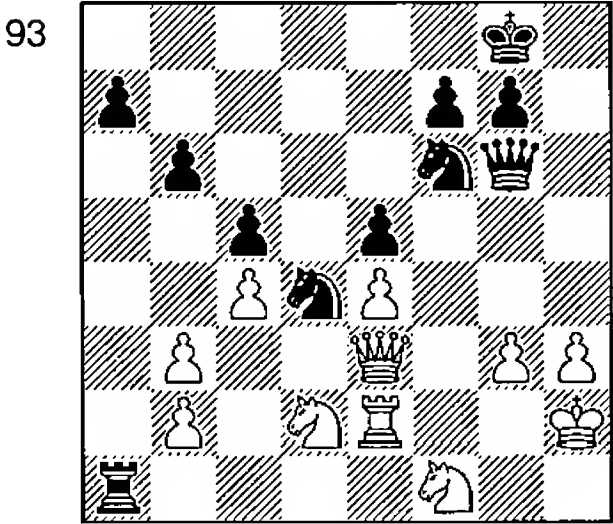


- 34... ♜f8!

The knight maneuvers to the outpost on d4 and clears g6 for the queen, from where it can attack the g3- and e4-pawns. The white knight cannot make

use of the outpost on d5, because after 35. ♜e3 ♖xg1 36. ♔xg1 the g3-pawn hangs. Also, the d4 outpost is more effective for Black than d5 is for White because the black knight can threaten the white king and the b3-pawn from d4, whereas a white knight on d5 would lack similar targets.

35. ♔e3 ♖g6
36. ♖g2 ♜e6
37. ♖e2 ♜d4



This game is a perfect illustration of Steinitz's theory of the accumulation of small positional advantages and their subsequent transformation to material advantages. The active rook deep in enemy territory, the knight on d4, and numerous pawn weaknesses – all these factors together will soon lead to the loss of a pawn, and, as a result, to the loss of the game.

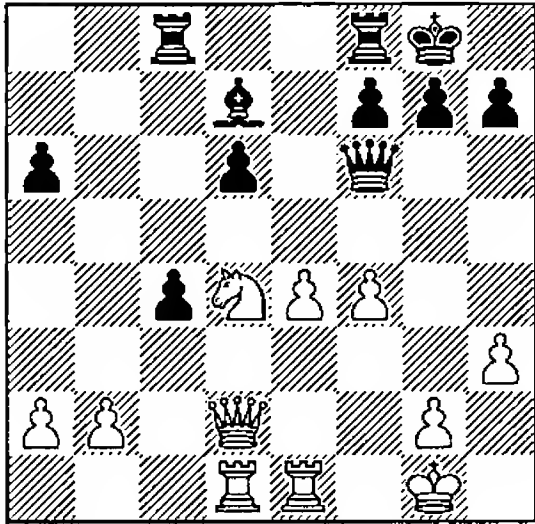
38. ♖f2 ♖a2

The b2-pawn can be saved only by dropping the e4-pawn. But the game is soon over anyway.

39. ♜f3 ♜xf3+ 40. ♔xf3 ♔xe4 41. ♔xe4 ♜xe4 42. ♖e2 ♜g5 43. ♔g2 ♜e6 0-1

No. 29: Static Weaknesses Give Time to Regroup

94

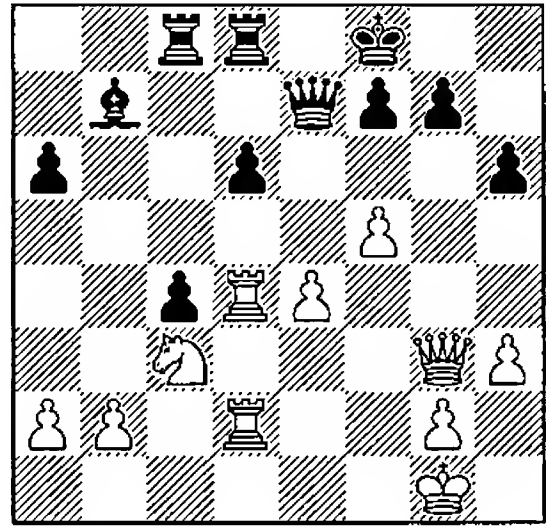


Q. Evaluate the diagram position.

Generally speaking, providing a precise evaluation of a position is one of the most difficult tasks in chess. Yet, in **Spassky–Averbakh** (USSR Championship 1963), it is easy to see that White's pieces are better centralized than Black's and that Black's pawn structure is in shreds. Thus, White is better. White's plan is based on the fact that Black cannot change the pawn structure, which gives the attacking side time to regroup his forces. This begins by doubling rooks on the central file.

25. ♘e2! ♙a4 26. ♖c1 ♜fd8 27. ♞c3 ♙c6 28. ♜cd1 h6 29. ♚e3 ♜b8 30. ♜e2 ♜bc8 31. ♜d4 ♙b7 32. ♜ed2 ♚e7 33. ♚g3 ♙f8 34. f5:

95



34... ♜e8

All of White's forces are aimed at the d6-pawn, and the defense 34...♜c6 fails to the simple 35. e5. Now that the fortress falls, White wins material.

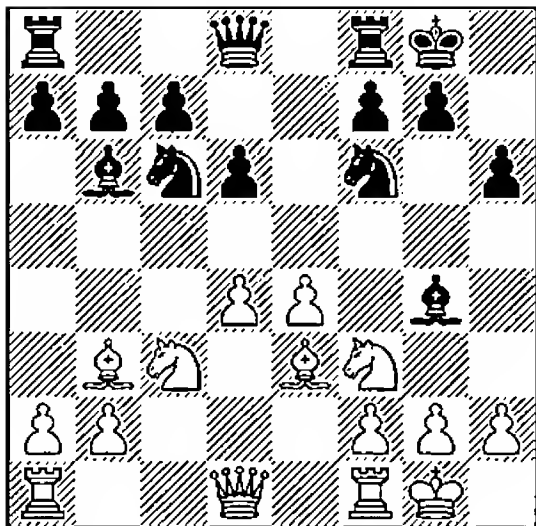
35. ♜xd6 ♚e5 36. ♚xe5 ♜xe5 37. ♜2d4 a5 38. ♜b6 ♙a8 39. ♜a6 ♚e8 40. ♙f2 ♙f8 41. ♚e3 ♜ec5 42. ♜d7 ♙c6 43. ♜da7 a4 44. ♙d4 ♙e8 45. ♜b6 h5 46. g4 h4 47. ♜bb7 ♜5c6 48. ♞d5 ♜d8 49. g5 ♜cd6 50. ♙xc4 ♜c6+ 51. ♙d4 ♜c2 52. ♙e5 ♜c4 53. g6 f6+ 54. ♞xf6 gxf6+ 55. ♙xf6 ♜c6+ 1-0

Chapter II

Play in and for the Center

No. 30: The Benefits of Controlling the Center

96



Q. Evaluate this position.

For the sake of clarity, let's first come to an understanding about terms. The middle of the board, as formed by the central squares d4, d5, e4, and e5, is called the center. Possession of the center is of the utmost value, because the one who controls it has a strategic advantage. It is analogous to controlling the high ground during a battle.

Thus, with the exception of the rooks, nearly all the pieces located in

or near the center of the board have more scope for activity and the ability to attack a greater number of squares all around. Moreover, centralized pieces can quickly access any place on the board where their help is required. And if one side possesses the center, then the opponent's forces are likely either separated or packed together, considerably lowering their effectiveness. From this it follows that during the initial phase of the game it is necessary to fight for control of the center. This means that one must take into account the value of the central squares when developing one's forces. At the same time, it is necessary to prevent the opponent's forces from gaining control of this strategically important sector. Of course, this strategy applies to both sides. Therefore, in its early stages, the battle often revolves around the fight for the center.

An important role in this fight is assigned to the weakest units – the pawns. By controlling the central squares, the pawns make them inaccessible to enemy

pieces. On the other hand, if the pawns do not control any support points in an opening formation, that can lead to an unpromising position where the pieces can be driven back against the onrushing avalanche of pawns.

The game under consideration, **Leonhardt–Burn** (Karlsbad 1911), demonstrates the value of the fight for the center. In the diagram position, Black’s situation is unpleasant. The white pieces, under cover of the center pawns, are grouped for a decisive attack. At the same time, the black pieces have difficulty maneuvering because they have no support points in the center at their disposal.

11. ♔d3! ...

White unpins the knight and frees his pieces for action.

11... ♖e8

The exchange 11... ♙xf3 was unfavorable for Black, as it would only bolster White’s center and allow White to build up an attack on the open g-file.

12. ♘d2 ♔e7

13. ♖ae1 ...

The rook takes up a position on the center file: White’s attack is almost ready to roll.

13... ♖ad8

14. a3 ...

Necessary prophylaxis; White prevents the intrusion of the black knight on b4.

14... ♔f8

15. f4! ...

Not only does this fight for the center, it also threatens to trap the black bishop by f4-f5, h2-h3, and g2-g4. Besides, it is part of White’s general plan for an attack on the kingside.

15... ♙c8

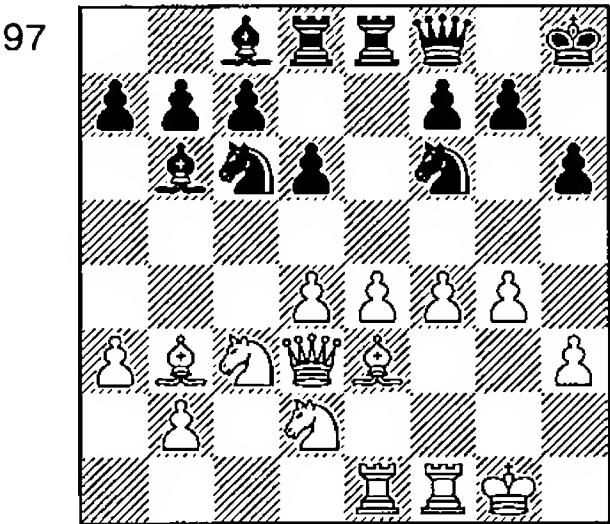
16. h3 ...

White prevents the move of the knight to g4 and prepares to storm the kingside.

16... ♔h8

Black has no useful moves to make, and simply awaits developments.

17. g4 ...



The picture could not be clearer. Thanks to his advantage in the center, White develops a strong attack on the kingside. Black is powerless due to his constricted position.

17... ♘e7

18. ♔h1 d5

An overdue attempt to do something in the center, so as to not be absolutely choked.

19. e5 ♘h7

20. f5 f6

Black tries to slow down the assault on his fortress.

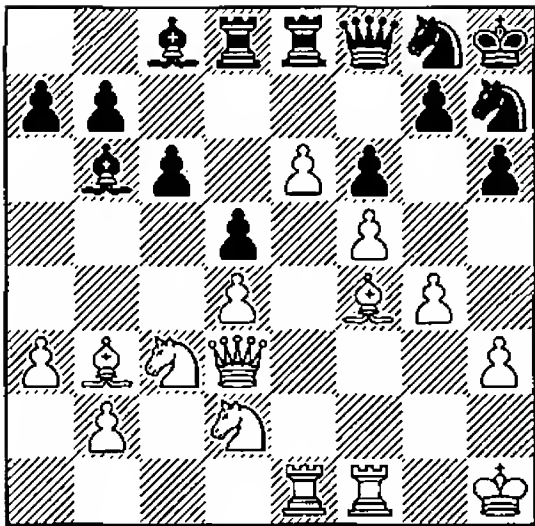
21. e6 c6

22. ♙f4! ...

White does not allow the opponent to play his bishop to the important b8-h2 diagonal.

22... ♘g8

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White has already achieved a definitive advantage. His pieces dominate the whole board, and in an instructive manner he converts his positional advantage into victory.

23. ♖a4 ♙a5

24. ♖xb6 axb6 25. ♙c7 was threatened.

24. ♙c2 ♔e7

25. ♔g3! ...

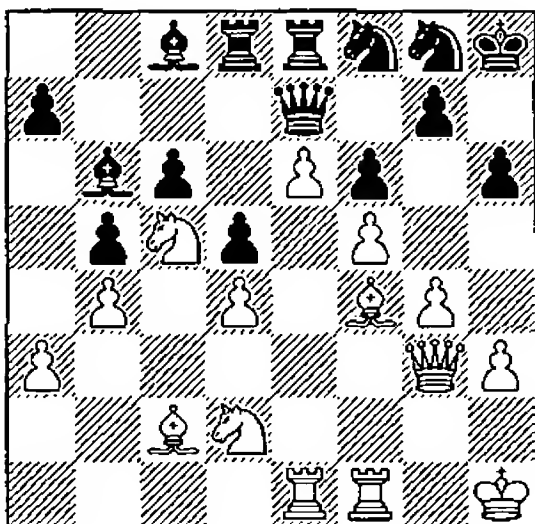
The poor bishop is kept away from c7 once again.

25... b5

26. ♖c5 ♙b6

27. b4 ♜f8

99



28. a4 ...

It is this break on the queenside that decides the game. If 28...a6, then 29.

axb5 axb5 30. ♖a1 when the white rooks penetrate into the enemy flank.

28... a5

29. ♖db3 bxa4

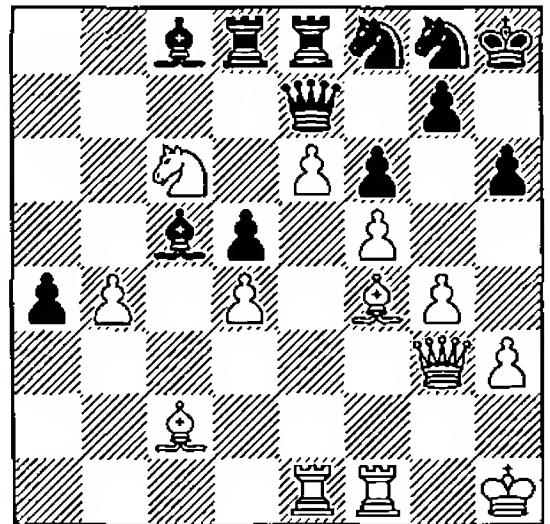
Or 29...axb4 30. a5 ♙a7 31. ♙c7.

30. ♜xa5 ♙xc5

31. ♖xc6! ...

After this terrific in-between move, Black cannot avoid material losses.

100



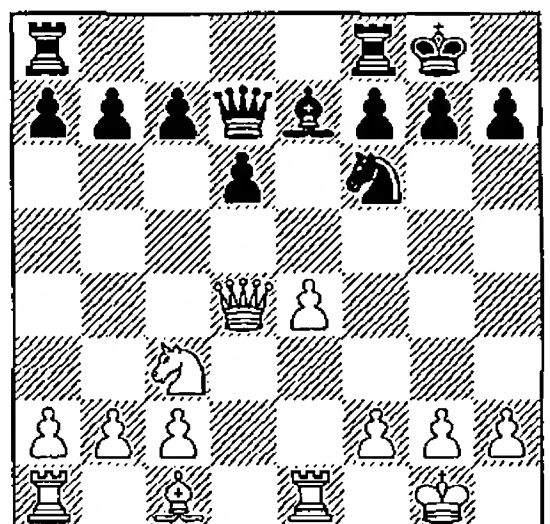
31... ♜xd4

In desperation, Black gives away the queen, but that brings no relief.

32. ♖xe7 ♜xe7 33. ♙c7 ♙e5 34. ♜xe5 ♜xc7 35. ♜xd5 ♙b7 36. ♔xc7 ♙xd5+ 37. ♔g1 ♜e8 38. ♙xa4 ♜e7 39. ♔b8 ♖h7 40. ♜d1 ♜b7 41. ♔xb7 ♙xb7 42. ♜d8 1-0

No. 31: The Better Center Pawn

101

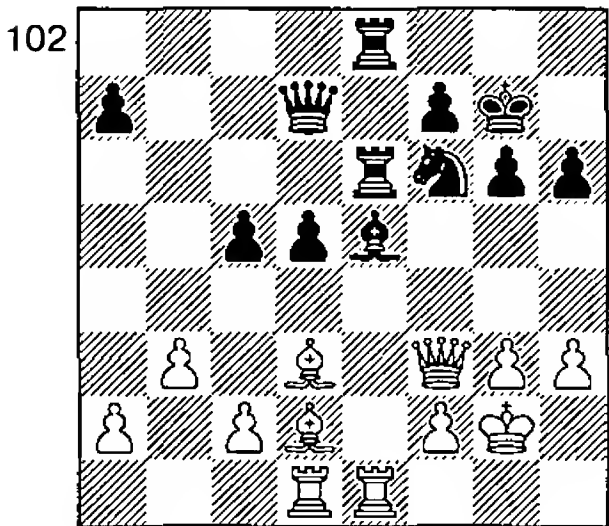


A. In this position, is White a) better, or b) equal?

B. How should White continue?

Seldom are we able to build the classical pawn center, as our opponent can usually trade one of the center pawns. Thus, most often we will face positions with only one pawn in the center. The above position arose in the game **Tarrasch–Schlechter** (Leipzig 1894). Both sides possess a single center pawn: White controls the central square d5 and Black controls e5, but the positions can't be considered absolutely equal. Since d5 is in Black's territory, a white piece located there (especially a knight) will put much more pressure on Black's position, than a black piece would upon White's position from e5, which is still in Black's half of the board. Besides, White can also take d4 and e4 under control with his pieces. Thus he actually controls three of the four central squares.

However, it is necessary to remember that centralization is not an end in itself, only a means to an end. To illustrate this principle, let's consider the following position from **Akmentins–Petkevich** (Riga 1962), where Black is well centralized, but White is to move:



26. ♖e3! As a result of this move, Black loses a pawn. Play continued 26... c4 27. ♖xh6+ ♜g8 28. ♙f5! and White vigorously capitalized on the weakened kingside and won.

Such pawn structures as these usually arise from open games. The position in **Tarrasch–Schlechter** arose from Stein-itz's defense to the Ruy López (Spanish Game). White's strategic advantage is indisputable; his plan is to organize a kingside attack using his space advantage and the greater maneuverability of his pieces, while giving Black no chance to ease his position by exchanges.

11. b3! ...

The first step in White's plan begins with the deployment of the bishop to the a1-h8 diagonal. He considers it will be more active here than on g5, f4, or e3. This continuation will underscore the weakness of the dark squares once Black institutes his plan of ...♞fe8 and ...♙f8 with a fianchetto on g6.

11... ♜fe8

12. ♙b2 ♙f8

Just in time; otherwise, White would put his knight on d5 to attack the vulnerable point g7.

13. ♞ad1 ♖c6

14. e5 was threatened. Having reacted to that danger, Black tries to organize counterplay against the center pawn on e4. However, White can easily rebuff Black's threats, and Black will soon have nothing to do but wait for White to make concrete threats.

14. ♞d3 ♞e6

15. ♞de3 ♞ae8

16. h3 ...

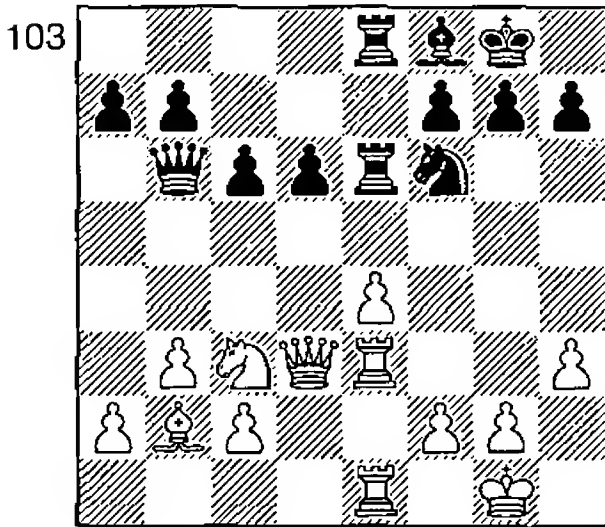
White knows that he has a space advantage and the more active bishops, so he

limits the opponent's possibilities by hindering the maneuver of the knight to g4.

16... ♖b6

On 16...g6, Tarrasch would have stayed on top with 17. ♘d5! ♕g7 18.c4. If Black now trades bishops with 18... ♘h5, there follows 19. ♖d2 ♕xb2 20. ♖xb2, when the black knight at the edge of the board is bad, and the centralized white knight is excellent. Here White threatens 21. g4 and if the knight retreats, then 22. ♘f6+. Recall the note to White's eleventh move.

17. ♖d3 c6



This is the first strategic achievement — the d6-pawn is weakened. Because White threatened to take control of d5 after g2-g4-g5, Black ventured ...c7-c6, planning a subsequent ...d6-d5. The fight will now revolve around this advance.

18. ♘a4 ...

By this move and the next, Tarrasch thwarts the d-pawn's advance.

18... ♖c7

19. c4 ♘d7

Fianchettoing the bishop would now seriously weaken the d6-pawn, so Schlechter aims to hinder White's play on the a1-h8 diagonal.

20. ♕h1 ...

White plans to advance the f- and g-pawns, so Tarrasch clears the g-file for his rooks.

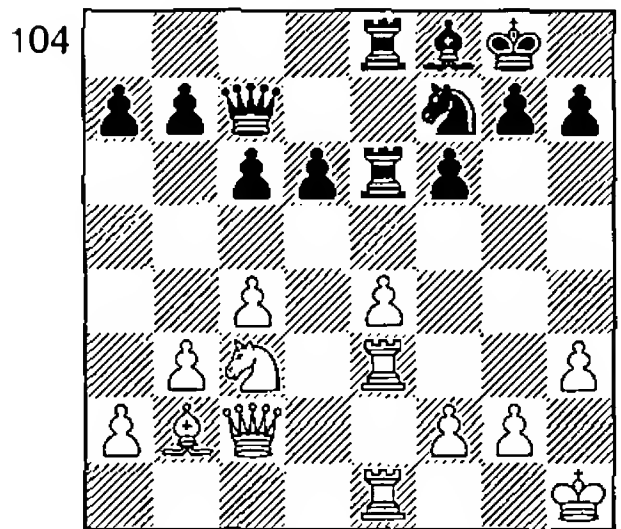
20... f6

21. ♖c2 ♘e5

22. ♘c3 ...

Having advanced the c-pawn to prevent ...d6-d5, White now maneuvers the knight to the kingside where it will take part in the attack against the enemy king. The route is ♘c3-e2-d4-f5.

22... ♘f7



23. g4 ...

White gets too clever in his ambition to prevent even a hint of counterplay. White dismisses the direct 23. ♘e2 in view of 23...f5. But now Black has the opportunity for 23...d5! when, after 24. exd5 ♖xe3 25. ♖xe3 ♖xe3 26. fxe3 ♖g3, the worst is over for Black.

Instead of the text move, White would do well to simply retreat the queen to b1. Then in case of 23...d5, White could capture on d5 with the c-pawn.

23... ♖a5

Black prevents the knight maneuver to e2, as the e1-rook would be *en prise*.

24. ♖d1 ♖b6

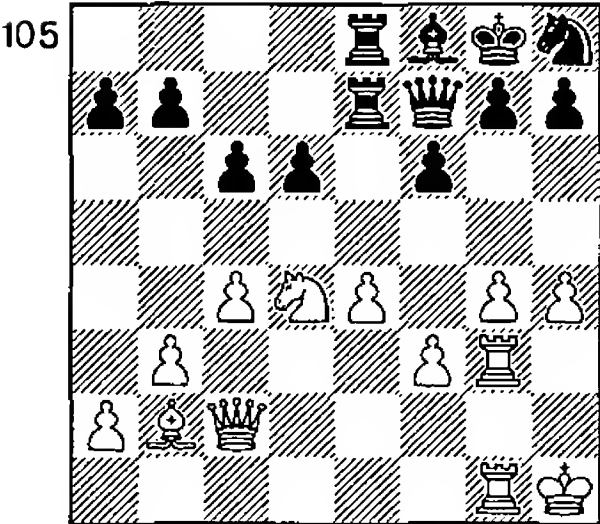
Black lacks a clear strategic plan, so he resorts to tactical tricks. Now 25.

♖e2 is met by 25...♗g5, when the white knight would be compelled to return to its former post to defend the e4-pawn. If 26. ♗g3, the h3-pawn would hang.

25. h4 ...

Now White is ready to double rooks on the g-file and to put the knight on f5, while Black can only sit and see what happens. This is the rationale for the next several moves.

25...	♗e5
26. ♖g3	♗f7
27. f3	♗h8
28. ♗e2	♙c7
29. ♖dg1	♙f7
30. ♗d4	♖e7



31. g5! ...

The g7 square is the focus of the attack.

31...	fxg5
32. ♖xg5	g6

Black further weakens the a1-h8 diagonal in order to bolster f5.

33. ♗f5	♖e5
34. f4	...

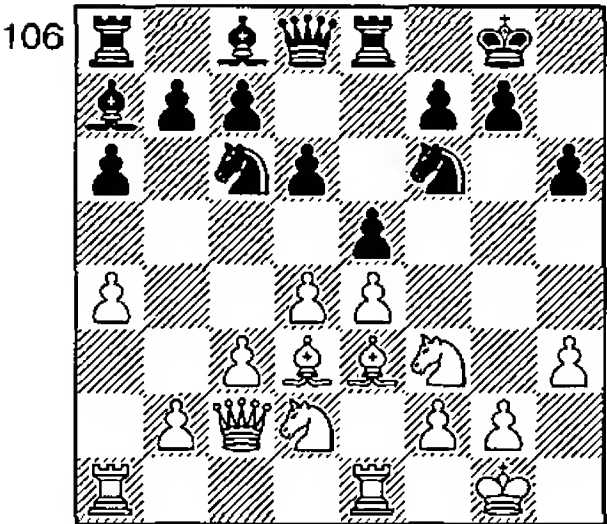
Black tries to appease the opponent by means of a sacrifice, but the bishop is too valuable to be exchanged for the rook.

34... ♖xf5

This move is tantamount to surrender, but otherwise the queen and bishop would form a battery on the a1-h8 diagonal.

35. exf5	♗g7
36. fxg6	1-0

No. 32:
A Deceptively Strong Center



Q. How strong is White's pawn center?

14... exd4!




Tarrasch taught that one should not yield the center in this way. So perhaps this move by Alekhine in the game against him (Baden-Baden 1925) was unexpected for White. Alekhine makes use of the fact that 15. cxd4 is unfavorable because of 15...♗b4, with the destruction of the important light-squared bishop. As a result, the enemy pawn center is shattered. It turns out that it wasn't so strong!

15. ♗xd4	♗e5
16. ♗f1	d5!

Now Black's position in the center is at least as strong as White's.








17. ♖ad1 ...

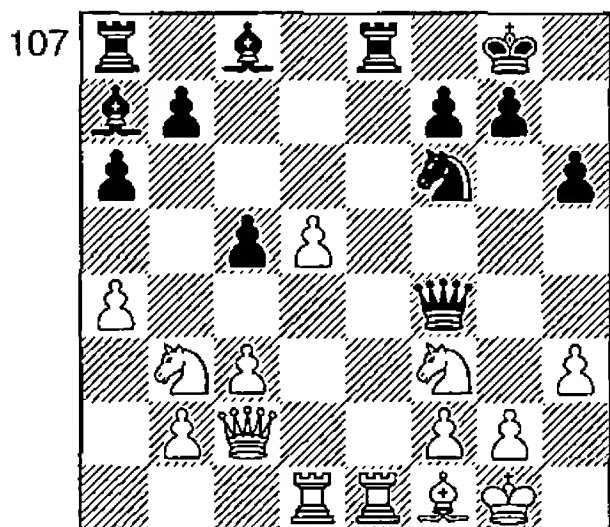
White cannot play 17. f4 because of 17...♗g6 18. e5 ♗h5 winning a pawn.

17...	c5
18.  b3	 c7
19.  f4	...




Better was 19. exd5, when Alekhine planned to play 19...♘xd5 20. ♖c4 ♘xc4 21. ♙xc4 ♗xe3 22. ♖xe3 ♙xe3 23. fxe3 ♚e7, with the brighter prospects.

19... ♘f3+!
20. ♖xf3 ♙xf4
21. exd5? ...

This error is fatal. Better was 21. e5 f5 22. d2 xd2 23. xd2 e4 24. dd1 ad8, although Black's position is still preferable.



21...  f5!

The final finesse! The immediate 21...  h3 is much less convincing, as after 22. gxf3  xf3 23.  g2 White has cause for optimism. It was probably because of this variation that Tarrasch ventured this line. He likely missed the game move in his calculations.

22. ♖d3 ...

On 22. ♖d2, Alekhine gives 22... ♖xa4 23. ♗c1 ♕c2 24. ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 25. ♖e1 ♗e4 26. ♖f4 c4 27. ♗d4 ♕xd4 28. cxd4 ♖b4!, when Black's advantage is enough to win.

22...  xh3

Now that the light-squared bishop has vacated the f1-h3 diagonal, this capture brings success. The purpose of 21... ♗f5 was to compel White's light-squared bishop to weaken the kingside. Black would not achieve anything upon 22... ♗xd3 23. ♖xd3 c4 because of 24. ♖d2.

23. gxh3 ♙xf3

24. ♖xe8+ ...

In case of 24. ♖f1, Black would trade rooks and deprive White of his one hope – the passed d5-pawn. But now Black concludes the game with a mating attack.

24... ♖xe8

25. ♖f1 ♔e5

26. c4 g5+

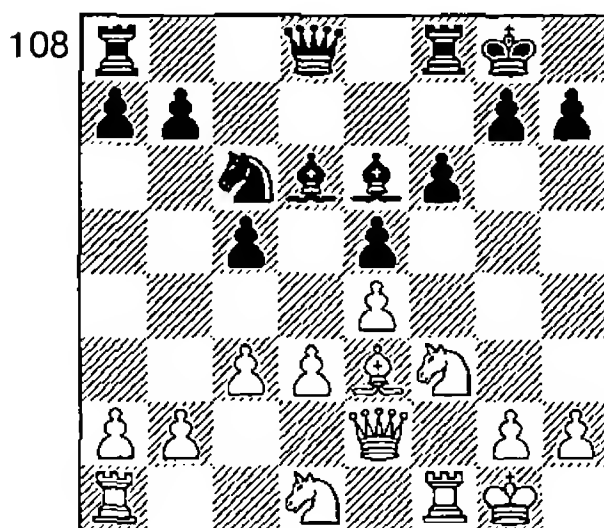
27. ♔h2 ♖g4+

28. hxg4 ♖xg4

0-1

White resigned, as checkmate is inevitable.

No. 33: The “Mysterious Rook Move”



Q. White is preparing to break in the center. How can Black counter this?

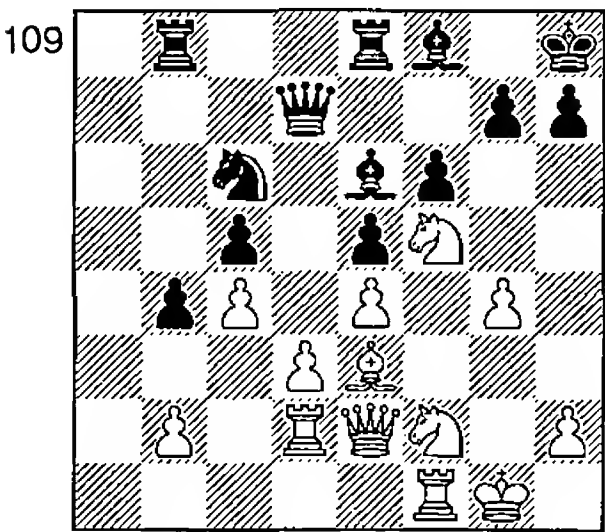
14... ♖e8!

This “mysterious rook move” was played in **Blackburne—Nimzowitsch** (St. Petersburg 1914). It is directed against the main strategic threat, the break d3-d4, because if the e-file is opened, the opposition of the rook and the queen will be unpleasant for White. At the same time, by the move ...♙d6-f8, Black will bolster the defense of his king and open the d-file for the major pieces.

15. ♖h4
16. ♗f5
- ♙f8
- ♙h8

Now Black can play ...g7-g6 without fear of a check by the white knight on h6.

17. g4 ♔d7 18. ♗f2 a5 19. a3 b5 20. ♖ad1 ♖ab8 21. ♙d2 b4 22. axb4 axb4 23. c4



If White opened the file, Black would have an advantage in force. But now Black goes astray.

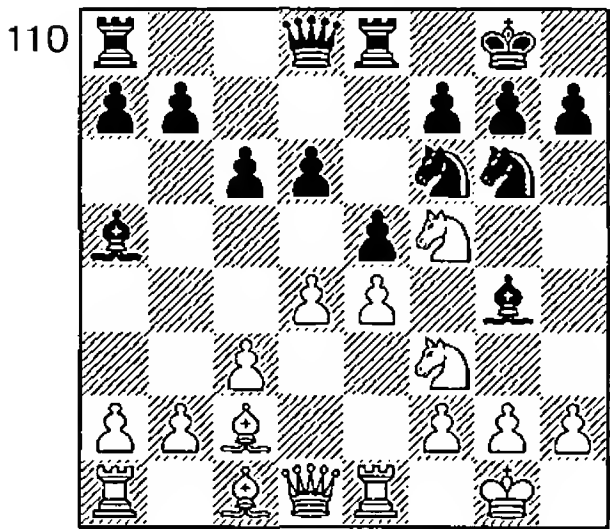
- 23...
- ♙a8?

After 23...g6 24. ♗g3 ♗d4 25. ♙xd4 cxd4, with the further ...♙h6, Black’s position would be overwhelming.

24. ♗f3 ♖a2 25. g5 g6 26. ♗g4 gxf5 27. ♗xf6 ♗d4 28. ♗f2 ♗c6 29. ♗xe8 ♗xe8 30. ♙xd4 exd4 31. exf5 ♙d7 32. ♙e1 ♗f7 33. ♗h4 ♙a8 34. ♙f2 ♙c6 35. ♗g4 ♙e8 36. ♙xe8 ♗xe8 37. ♙e2 ♗d7

38. ♙e6 ♙a8 39. g6 hxg6 40. ♙xg6 ♗h7 41. ♗g3 ♗h5 42. ♙g4 1-0

No. 34: Opening the Center



Q. Evaluate the consequences of White’s last move, 14. ♗g3-f5.

In the game **Averbakh—Keres** (USSR Championship 1950), there was no reason for White’s move. As a result, Black takes the initiative and achieves a positional advantage.

- 14...
- ♙d5!

Black blasts opens the center to use his advantage in development. This motif is characteristic of dynamic chess.

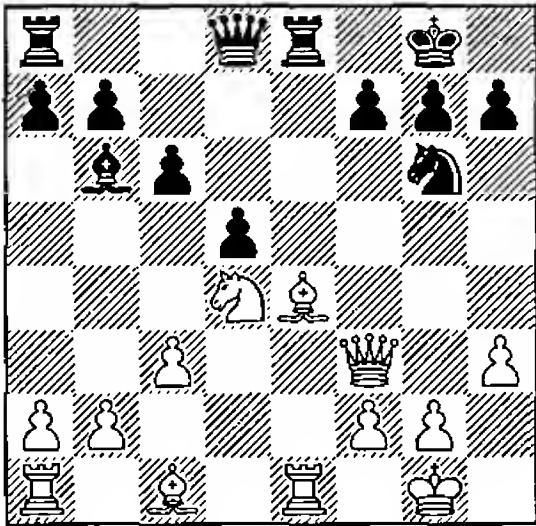
15. h3
16. ♗xf3
- ♙xf3
- ♙xe4!

On 16...exd4, White conjures up an attack by means of a pawn sacrifice after 17. ♙g5.

17. ♙xe4
18. ♗xd4
- exd4
- ♙b6!

Black is satisfied with a small but clear edge in the ending. He aims to create an isolated pawn on d4 to inconvenience White’s dark-squared bishop. These positional advantages eventually sufficed for Keres to win.

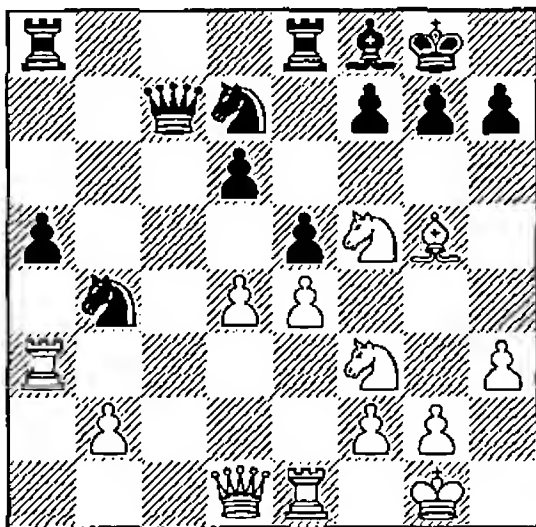
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19. ♔d2 dxe4 20. ♖xe4 ♖xe4 21. ♗xe4 ♕xd4 22. cxd4 ♗e7 23. ♖g4 ♖d6 24. ♖e1 ♗d5! 25. b3 h5 26. ♗e4 ♗xe4 27. ♖xe4 f6 28. ♖f1 ♖f7 29. ♕a5 b6 30. ♕c3 ♖d8 31. ♕b2 ♖d6 32. g4 hxg4 33. hxg4 ♖e6 34. f3 ♖e7 35. ♕c1 ♖d5 36. ♕d2 ♖d6 37. ♖e2 ♖d8 38. ♖f2 ♖c7 39. a4 ♖e6 40. ♕e3 ♖d5 41. ♖g3 ♖e7 42. g5 f5! 43. ♖e5 ♖d6 44. ♖d5 ♖d5 45. g6 a5 46. ♖h4 ♖xd4 47. ♕h6 ♖e6 48. ♕e3 c5 49. ♖h5 ♖e5 50. ♕c1 ♖d4 51. ♕h6 ♖f6 52. ♕g5+ ♖e6 53. ♕h6 gxf6 54. ♖xh6 ♖c6 55. g7 ♖e7 56. ♖h7 ♖f7 57. ♖h6 ♖g8 58. f4 ♖f7 0-1

No. 35: Premature Opening

112



Q. In the game Keres—Gligorić (Candidates' Tournament 1959), White has

just played 22. ♖a3. Can Black take advantage of this and put his pawn on d5?

22...

d5?

Black searches for counterplay in the center, but this activity is premature. It can be explained by Black's anxiety over White's plan to attack on the kingside. However, as usual in such cases, the more actively developed side uses the opening of the game to get the advantage. The further course of the game shows White convincingly refuting the plan behind 22...d5.

The counterattack with 22...♖c2 looked tempting, but White would retain the better prospects after 23. ♖c3 ♗xc3 24. bxc3 ♖xe1 25. ♖xe1 a4 26. ♖c2 a3 27. ♖g4.

23. dxe5

♖xe5

24. ♕f4!

...

This maneuver enables White to shift the rook to the kingside and mount a strong attack. It is likely that Black missed the power of this move, which is important to the evaluation of the whole variation. By the way, note the maneuver that White carries out in this game: ♖a1-a3-g3. This sort of "rook lift" is a necessary component of our chess armory.

24...

♖xf3+

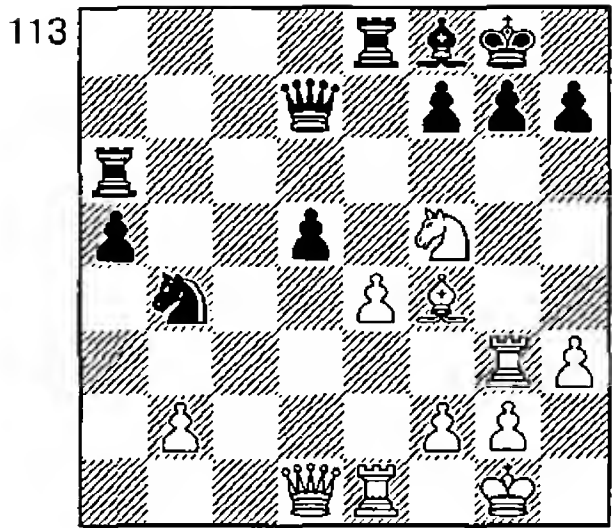
25. ♖xf3

♗d7

This is a poor spot for the queen which gives White additional possibilities. However, it is already difficult to find good moves for Black. For example, on 25...♗b7, there follows 26. e5! and White has a positional advantage; while 25...♗c2 could be met by 26. ♖h6+! ♖h8 (26...gxf6 is bad for Black in view of 27. ♖g3+ ♕g7 28. ♗d4 f6 29. ♕xh6, etc.) 27. ♖f7+ ♖g8 28. ♗d4 with powerful threats.

26. ♖g3

♖a6?



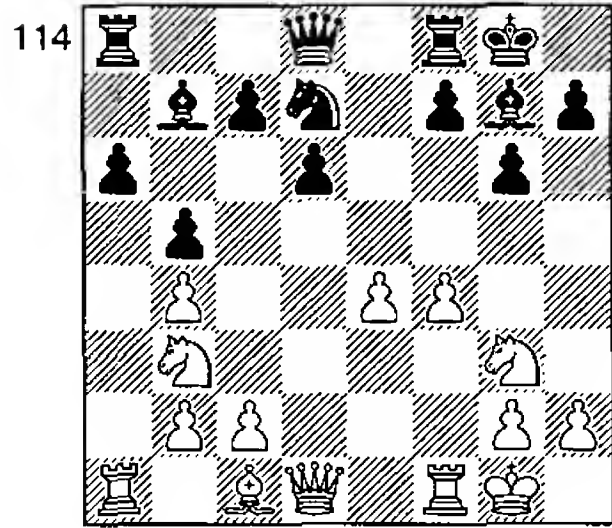
A fatal error that allows White to develop a decisive attack. Black had to play 26...g6, though after 27. ♖h6+ ♕xh6 28. ♕xh6 he would have trouble defending the dark squares; still, this was the best way out of the situation.

27. ♖xg7+! ...

A simple yet unexpected combination, easy to miss. Black drops his queen.

27...♕xg7 28. ♖g4 ♖f5 29. ♖f5 ♖f6 30. ♖d7 ♖fe6 31. ♖e3 dxe4 32. ♖g3 ♖a8 33. ♖d4 ♖g6 34. ♖xe4 ♖c8 35. b3 ♖c6 36. ♖d3 ♖e6 37. ♖c4 ♖ee8 38. ♖g3 ♖e6 39. ♕h6 ♖g6 40. ♕xg7 ♖xg7 41. ♖c3+ ♖g8 42. h4 ♖e7 43. ♖xg6+ hxg6 44. ♖xa5 ♖c1+ 45. ♖h2 ♖d1 1-0

No. 36: Strategic Attack on the Center



Q. Is White's pawn center strong, or weak?

Sadly for White in **Tarrasch-Chigorin** (Match [19] 1893), his center is weak. The reason for this was the early advance of the white pawn to f4. It would be a different story if the pawn were supported by pieces, but as White's development is not yet complete, the e4-pawn becomes a target.

16... ♖e8!

With this move Chigorin opens an energetic attack on the e4-pawn, which concludes with several graceful combinational blows.

17. ♖e1 ♖f6

18. ♖d2 ...

Chigorin gave the following variations:

a) On 18. ♖d3, there follows 18... ♖e7 19. ♖d2 d5 20. e5 ♖xb4, and if 21.exf6 ♖xe1+ 22. ♖f2, then 22...♖xc1 with a much better position for Black;

b) If 18. e5, then 18...♖d5 19. exd6 ♖xd6 20. ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 when Black has an excellent position and a strong attack. For example, 21. c3 (21. ♖c5 ♖c8 22. c3 ♖xc3 23. ♖xd6 cxd6, etc.) 21...♖c6 22. ♖a5 ♖b6+ 23. ♖f1 (23. ♖h1 ♖f2 24. ♖d2 ♖xf4) 23...♖a8 and White is lost.

18... ♖d7

19. h3 ♖e7

20. ♖e2 ♖ae8

21. ♖f1 ...

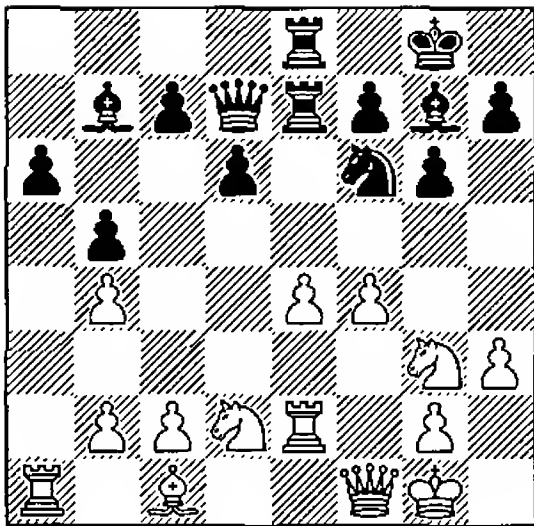
21. ♖e1 ♖c6 22. c3 ♖xe4 23. ♖dx4 f5 24. ♖d2 ♖xe2 brings White no relief.

(See Diagram 115)

21... h5!

Chigorin skillfully concentrates all his forces against the e4-pawn. Thanks to the threat of ...h5-h4, he has achieved an enormous positional advantage.

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22. h4 ...

White tries to resist, but the position cannot be defended by weakening g4. However, even the more solid 22. ♖e1 is unavailing in view of 22... ♙c6 23. c3 h4 24. ♘gf1 ♙xe4 25. ♙xh4 ♘xc3!.

22... ♙g4

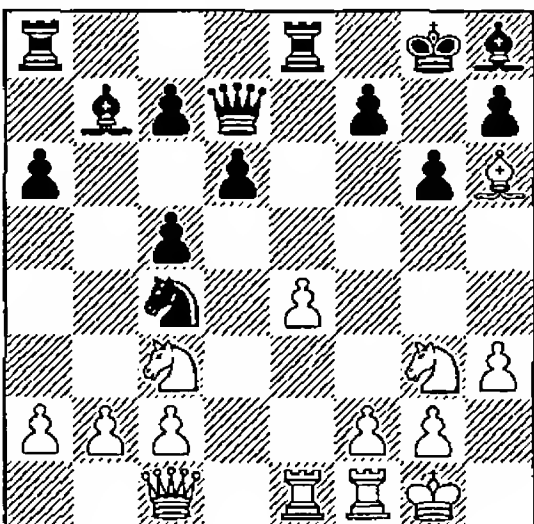
23. ♙f2 ♙xh4

The first material gain, but not the last one. This game is a classic example of a strategic attack in the center.

24. ♘f3 ♙g4 25. e5 ♘d5 26. ♘h2 ♙d7 27. exd6 ♙xd6 28. ♙xe7 ♙xe7 29. c3 ♘xb4 30. ♙e3 ♘d3 31. ♙d2 ♘xb2 32. ♙c1 ♘c4 33. ♙f2 h4 34. ♘gf1 ♙e2 35. ♘f3 h3 36. ♘g3 ♙xf3 37. gxf3 h2+ 38. ♙g2 ♘e3+ 39. ♙h1 ♙c6 40. ♘e4 ♘g4 41. ♙g2 ♘xf2 42. ♘xf2 ♙c5 0-1

No. 37: Knowing the Classics

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Q. In this position from Suetin—Konstantinopolsky (USSR Championship 1950), can White continue to attack Black's kingside by f2-f4?

I hope very much that the readers recognize the similarity between this position and the one from Tarrasch—Chigorin.

19. f4? ...

White's pawn center is like a house of cards that now begins to topple. Certainly White did not expect Black's next move, but it is a natural one designed to establish coordination between Black's queen and light-squared bishop, and to exploit the weakness of the important points e4 and g2.

It would doubtless be better for White to try to fortify his position by 19. ♙e2 or to banish the c4-knight with 19. ♘d1 and b2-b3.

19... ♙f5!

This move is obvious, but no less strong for that. The initiative now belongs to Black.

20. ♘d1 ...

Unfortunately, it is impossible to take the pawn. On 20. exf5, Black will exploit the weakening of the long diagonal by 20... ♙c6!.

20... ♙c6

On 20...fxe4 White had 21. b3 ♘b6 22. f5!.

21. b3 ♘b6

22. ♙e2 ...

The rook defends g2 in order to answer 22...fxe4 with 23. f5 without fearing 23...e3.

22 ... c4

This move stops c2-c4. Black threatens to advance the pawn still further,

which causes White to react accordingly.

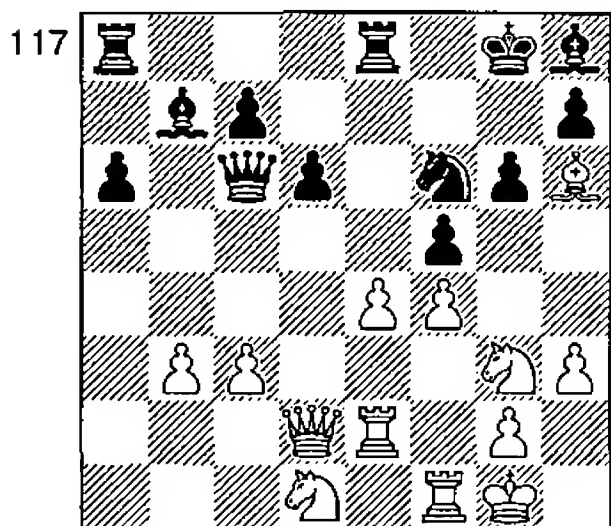
23. c3 cxb3

24. axb3 d7

Now the knight can go to c5 or f6.

25. d2 f6!

A fifth attacker on the e4-pawn forces exchanges that benefit Black.



26. exf5 xe2

27. xe2 e8

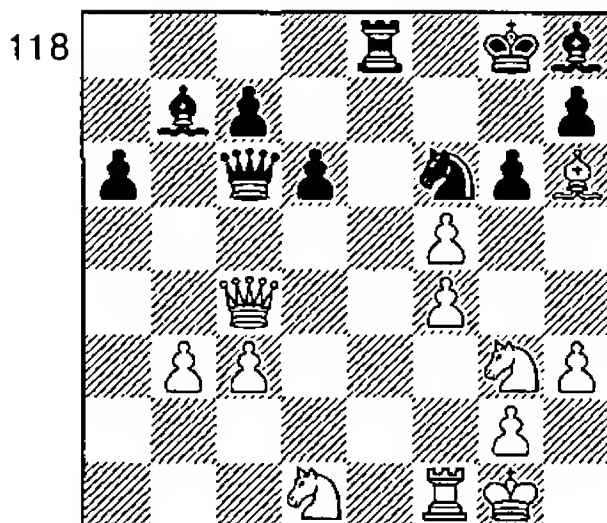
We can already speak of a decisive edge for Black.

28. c4+ ...

After 28. c2 gxf5 29. xf5 c5+ 30. d4 e4 (or 30... h5), Black has various threats. Also bad for White is 28. f2 gxf5 29. xf5 d5 30. de3 xb3 31. g3+ f7 32. g7 e4.

Black is better even in an ending after the queen trade thanks to his bishop pair and the passed a-pawn.

Clearly such a pawn can be very dangerous as it gets closer to promotion. Preventing its advance will require the attention of a contingent of white pieces, and the fight usually favors the side that manages to control the square in front of the passed pawn.



28... xc4

29. bxc4 gxf5

30. xf5 e4

Also good for Black is 30... e2 31. f2 e1+ 32. f1 xf1+ 33. xf1 e4 hitting c3 and c4.

31. g5 xc3

32. de3 ...

White's only hope is to transfer this knight to the kingside to create some threats.

32... a5

33. g4 e2

34. c1 a4!

White's three minor pieces cannot harm the black king. Therefore, Black forgoes capturing the g-pawn in order to advance his passer.

35. f6+ xf6

36. xf6 xg2+

37. f1 e2

(See Diagram 119)

38. b1? ...

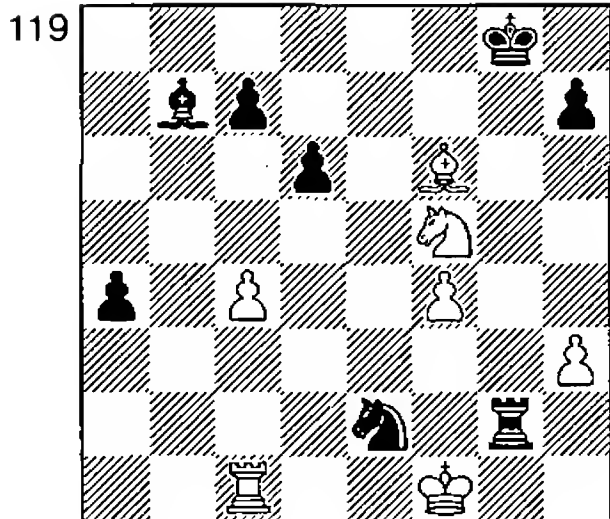
White errs in desperate time trouble, but this only hastens the inevitable. After 38. a1 f4, Black's advantage is decisive.

38... g1

39. xe2 xb1

40. h6+ f8

41. f5 a3

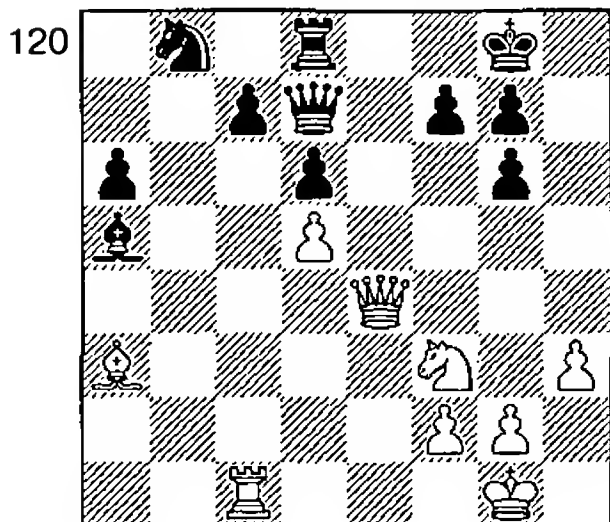


42. ♖h8 ♘c8
43. f6 ♘e6
0-1

From these two games, we can see the method at work. First, the e4-pawn is blockaded; second, a direct attack is focused upon it; third, the black pieces invade the opponent's camp.

Konstantinopolsky later wrote that because he was familiar with the game by Chigorin he knew what to do, and that it was only necessary to work out the tactical nuances. Thus, the advance f2-f4 was wrong, as the e4-pawn could no longer be supported by f2-f3. In addition, it also increases the scope of the b7-bishop.

No. 38: Centralization



Q. Evaluate the diagram position and suggest how White should arrange his pieces.

We have already discussed the various roles of the pawns in the center. Now it's time to talk about piece play in the center. The effectiveness of the pieces (especially the minor pieces) is determined by their position on the board. For example, a knight posted in the center can be transferred quickly to a critical sector on either wing. The positional elements of force and space are both affected by centralization of the pieces.

Incidentally, in order for the pieces to control the center it is important that they cannot be dislodged by the opponent's pawns, or challenged too strongly by the opponent's pieces.

Thus it follows that the position in Diagram 206 is considerably better for White. Every one of his pieces is much more active than its black counterpart, and they can easily control the center.

In the game **Alekhine—Allies** (Antwerp 1923), White demonstrates this with his very next move.

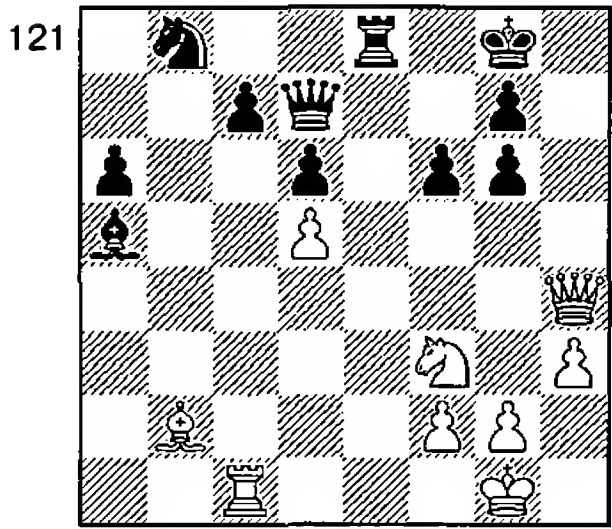
26. ♖b2! ...

The white bishop was White's worst-placed piece, so Alekhine brings it into play at once: the bishop now controls some central squares along the very important dark-square diagonal. At the same time, White threatens to attack with 27. ♘g5 and if Black replies 27... ♖d2, there follows 28. ♙d4 with a double attack on g7 and the bishop on d2.

26... ♖e8
27. ♙h4 ...

The queen is easily rerouted from the center to the kingside, creating the threat of 28. ♖g5.

27... f6



This is a significant achievement for White, but Black had no other way of preventing ♖g5. However, White now has an alternative invasion route for the knight – via e6.

28. ♖d4! ...

The contrast between the two knights is evident. While Black's knight is stuck on its starting square, White's knight threatens to take up a post close to the enemy king. At the same time, White's control of c6 paralyzes Black's queenside.

28... ♔f7

29. ♖c4! ...

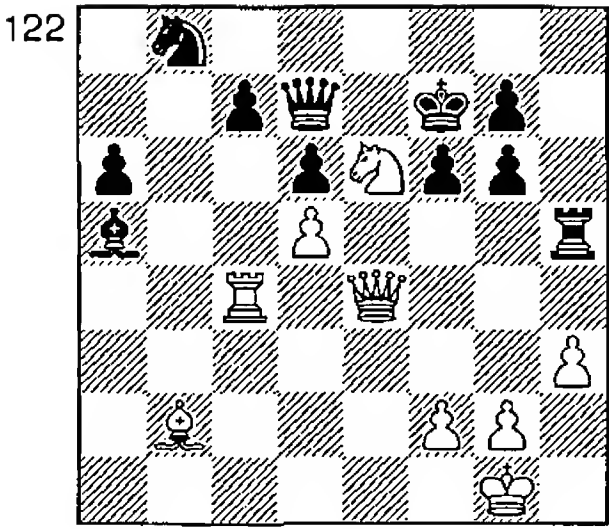
The immediate 29. ♖e6 would allow Black to solve many of his problems with an exchange sacrifice. Now, with the rook centralized, White threatens 30. ♖e6 ♖xe6 31. dxe6+ ♔xe6 32. ♖e4 ♔f5 33. ♕xf6 with a simple win.

29... ♖e5

30. ♖e6 ♖h5

If 30... ♖xd5, then 31. ♖xg7.

31. ♔e4! ...



Centralization and more centralization! This move is tactically justified by the variation 31... ♖xd5 32. ♖d8+ and White wins.

31... ♔e7

32. ♖d3 ♖b6

Black discovers that his planned move 32... ♖d7 is bad because of 33. ♖e4 ♖e5 34. ♔xa6 ♖b6 35. ♔c8 with a decisive attack.

33. ♖e4 ♖d7

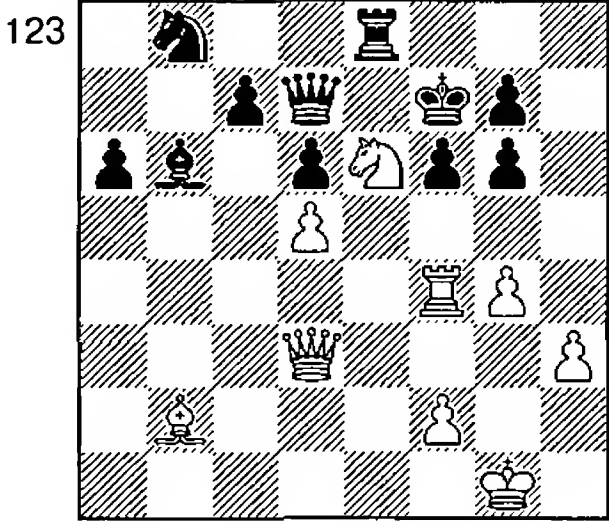
34. g4 ♖h8

35. ♖f4 ...

White makes three threats at once: 36. ♕xf6, 36. ♖xg7, and 36. g5. There is no defense.

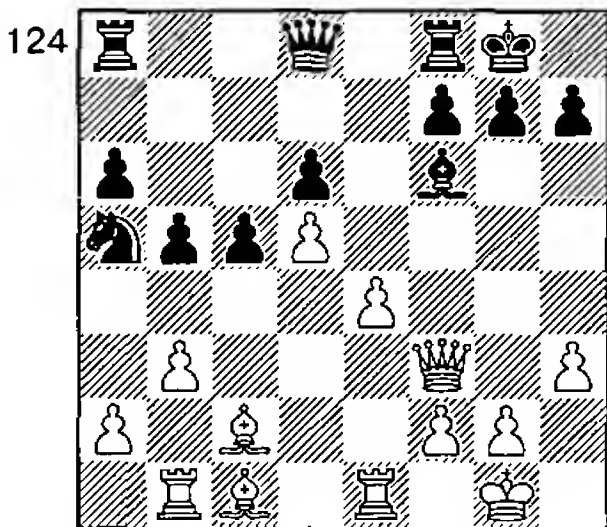
35... ♖e8

Now there comes the final combination.



36. ♖xf6 gxf6
 37. ♖xf6+ ♔xf6
 38. ♖c3 1-0

No. 39: Push to Activate



Q. What are the plans for both sides? Support your conclusion with variations.

In this position from **Tal–Gligorić** (Candidates' Match [7] 1968), White wants to prepare the central break e4–e5, after which both of his bishops will work to their full potential. If this is achieved, the poor position of the knight on square a5 – a perpetual problem for Black in the Spanish Game – would come into play.

Thus, Black's plan is to counteract White's intentions by keeping e5 under control, then bring the knight into play, and finally try to make use of his pawn majority on the queenside.

20... ♖e8

Another possibility was 20... ♗g5 21. ♗b2 ♗f6 22. ♗xf6 ♖xf6 23. ♖xf6 gxf6, but Black prefers not to weaken his kingside.

21. ♗f4 ...

A small subtlety. White invites the opponent's bishop to e5 in order to win a tempo later by f2–f4.

21... ♗e5
 22. ♗d2 ...

Trading bishops would be better for Black. After 22. ♗xe5 dxe5 (if 22... ♗xe5, White could quickly carry out the advances f2–f4 and e4–e5), Black would take firm control of the dark squares and obtain a convenient point on d6 for the knight.

22... ♗b7
 23. ♖e2 ...

More accurate was 23. g3, rather than withdrawing the queen from its active position. The exchange of the main pieces is not dangerous for White, as was shown in the game **Korchnoi–Portisch** from the 1967 Interzonal Tournament in Sousse.

23... ♖f6!
 24. ♖bd1 ...

The tempting 24. a4 is worse, as Black has the excellent reply 24... ♗c3! with equal chances in all variations: 25. e5 ♗xe5 26. ♖d3 g6 27. axb5 axb5 28. ♖xb5 ♖eb8; 25. ♗xc3 ♖xc3 26. axb5 axb5 27. ♖xb5 ♖xc2 28. ♖xb7 ♗a2.

24... ♗f4

The continuation 24... ♗c3 25. ♗xc3 ♖xc3 26. f4 only furthers White's plans.

25. ♖f3 ...
 25... ♗g5

Worthy of Black's attention was 25... ♗xd2 26. ♖xf6 gxf6 27. ♖xd2 ♗f8, although this breaks the pawn structure on his kingside.

26. ♖d3! ...

This is the only way to complicate the fight.

26... ♗xd2
 27. e5! ...

With the help of this in-between move, White makes his pieces considerably more active.

27... ♖h6

28. ♖xd2 c4!

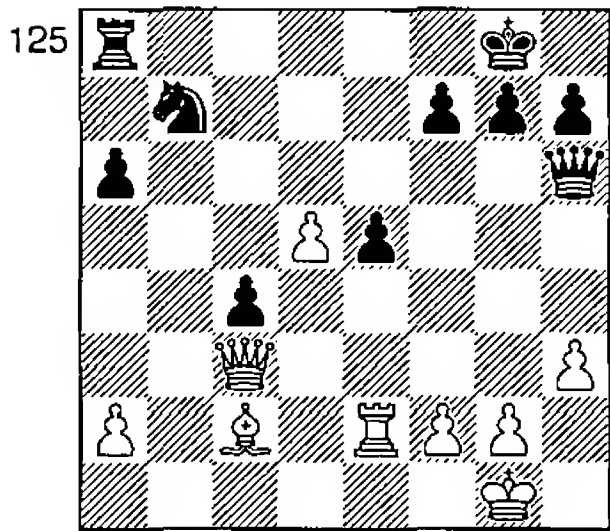
28...dxe5?! leads to very unpleasant consequences: 29. d6!. Or 28...♗xe5?! 29. ♖xe5 dxe5 30. d6!.

29. bxc4 bxc4

30. ♖c3 ♗xe5

31. ♖xe5 dxe5

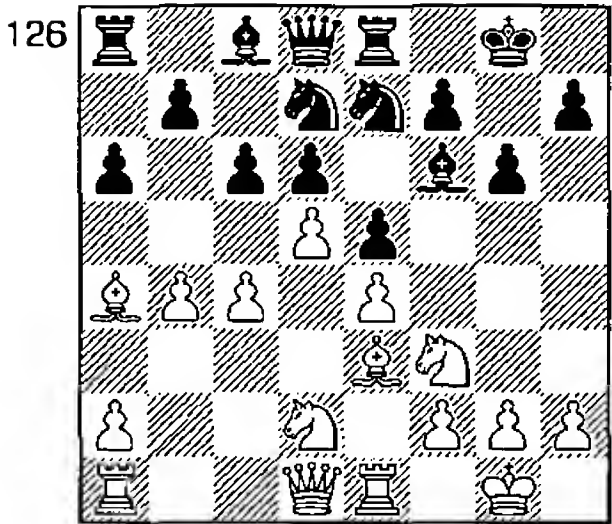
32. ♖e2 ...



The pawn is recovered immediately, and White's passed pawn can be very dangerous. White's advantage is defined by his much more active pieces, and he managed to win eventually.

32...♗d6 33. ♖xe5 ♖c1+ 34. ♗h2 ♖a3 35. ♖f4 ♗e8 36. ♖xe8+ ♗xe8 37. ♖xc4 g6 38. ♗b3 ♗d6 39. ♖d4 ♖c1 40. ♖a4 a5 41. ♖d4 ♗f5 42. ♖d1 ♖b2 43. ♗g1 ♗d6 44. ♖g4 ♖e5 45. g3 h5 46. ♖a4 ♗f5 47. ♖xa5 ♗xg3 48. fxg3 ♖xg3+ 49. ♖f1 ♖xh3+ 50. ♖e2 ♖g4+ 51. ♖d3 ♖g3+ 52. ♖c4 h4 53. ♖c5 ♖e3+ 54. ♖c6 ♖e8+ 55. ♖b7 h3 56. ♖c7 ♖g7 57. ♖c3+ f6 58. ♖xh3 ♖b5+ 59. ♖c7 ♖c5+ 60. ♖d7 ♖a7+ 61. ♖e8 ♖b8+ 62. ♖e7 ♖e5+ 63. ♖e6 ♖c7+ 64. ♖d7 ♖e5+ 65. ♖d8+ ♗h8 66. ♖c8 1-0

No. 40: Prying Open the Center



Q. Suggest a continuation for White.

14. ♖c1! ...

In Geller–Keres (USSR Championship 1973), White prepares to destroy Black's center with the break c4-c5. At the same time, White removes the rook from the diagonal of Black's dark-squared bishop.

14... ♗g7

White has two ways to answer 14... cxd5: the quiet 15. cxd5 and the sharper 15. exd5. Upon the latter, if 15...♗f5, White would continue 16. c5, threatening to advance the c-pawn and win material. And after 15...b5 16. ♗b3, a structure similar to the Sicilian Defense would arise with a weak point at c6 for Black.

15. c5! dxc5

Now White sacrifices a pawn to open the center and start a decisive attack. He could have also sacrificed a piece by 16. d6, with active play after 16...b5 17. cxb5.

16. bxc5 cxd5

17. exd5 ♗xd5

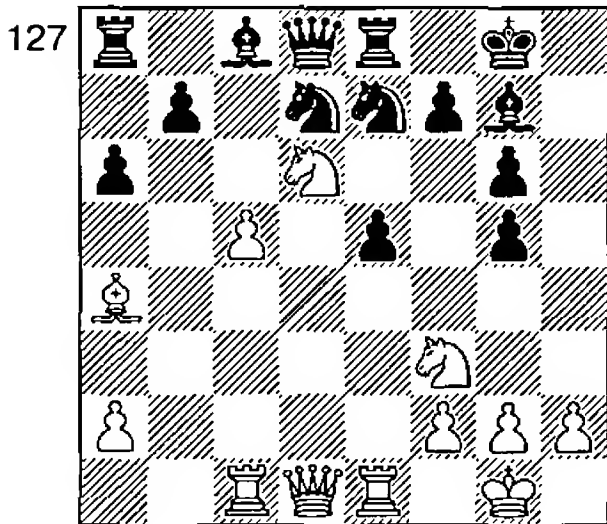
18. ♗g5 ♗e7

18...♗f6 is bad in view of 19. ♗e4! ♗xg5 20. ♗xg5 ♗e7 21. ♗xd7 ♗xd7 22. ♖xd7 winning a piece, and 18...♖a5

fails to 19. Qc4 Kxc5 20. Ncxe5 when material losses are inevitable for Black.

19. Ne4 h6
20. Nd6! bxc5

There is no other move. If 20... Rf8 , then 21. Qxe7 Kxe7 22. Nxc8 and 23. Qxd7 .



21. Nxf7!! ...

A decisive destruction of the king-side. Capturing the knight leads to either loss of the queen or checkmate after 21... Qxf7 22. Nxcg5+ (22... Kg8 23. Qb3+ ; 22... Qf8 23. Ne6+) 22... Qf6 23. Nh7+ Qf7 24. Qb3+ .

21... Ka5

21... Kc7 makes no difference, if 22. Ng5 and the threat of 23. Qb3 cannot be deflected.

22. N7xg5 Rf8
23. Qxd7 ...

This is the simplest way to win. Having restored the material balance, White keeps the initiative and a decisive edge.

23... Qxa2
24. Re2 Qa3

Curiously, centralizing the queen by 24... Qd5 loses to 25. Rd2 .

25. Re3 Qb4

After 25... Qa2 , the queen would be caught with 26. Rc2 Qd5 27. Rd3 .

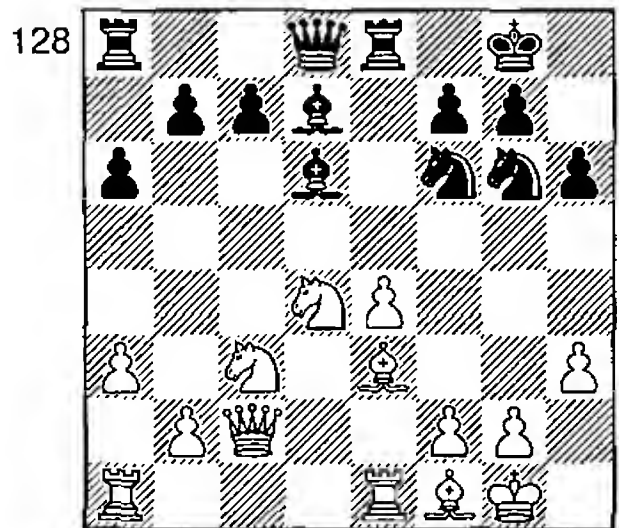
However, now White has achieved his aim: e6 is in his hands.

26. Qxc8 Kxc8
27. Qd7 Nf5

27... Rfe8 leads to mate after 28. Qe6+ Kh8 29. Qf7+ Kh7 30. Q3g5+ Kg8 31. Nh6+ Kh8 32. Qg8+ Ng8 33. Nhf7\# , while 27... Rce8 leads to heavy material losses.

28. Qe6+ Kh8
29. Qxcg6 1-0

No. 41: The Benefit of an Extra Center Pawn



Q. Evaluate the diagram position.

Situations in which one side has an extra mobile center pawn (i.e., e4 or d4) are typical of many structures. In general, the side with the center pawn aspires to organize an assault in that sector, say, with the e- and f-pawns. The defender's task is to restrain the opponent's center.

As a rule, in such positions simplifications favor the defender. A majority of pawns on the flank can be of great value when there are few pieces on the board. However, when most of the pieces are present, especially the minor pieces, the

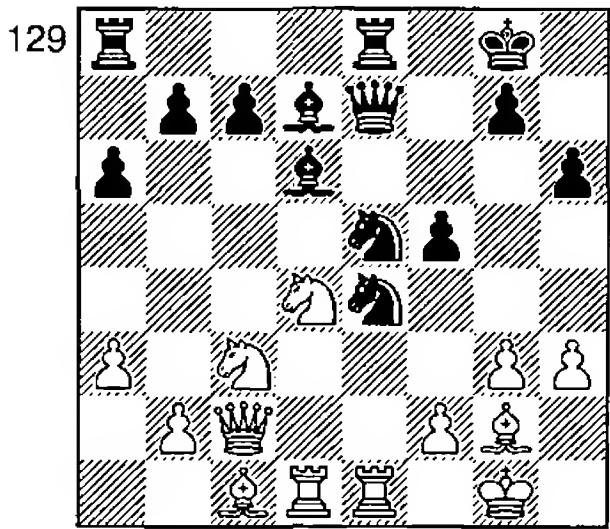
mobile pawn center can be very uncomfortable for the defender.

This example, from the game **Keres–Lipnitsky** (Moscow 1951), is very instructive. Here the central e4-pawn limits Black’s mobility, while White’s pieces work harmoniously. Black’s last move 16...♘e5-g6, was prompted by the threat of 17. f4 and 18. e5.

17. ♖ad1 ♙e7
18. g3! ...

Here is an instructive point. White sacrifices his e4-pawn for a favorable opening of the game in the center. Black has no choice; he must accept the challenge because the threat of 19. ♔g2 and f2-f4, gaining more space, is quite unpleasant for him.

- 18... ♘xe4
19. ♔c1 f5
20. ♔g2 ♘e5



21. ♘xf5! ...

White methodically destroys Black’s bastions in the center. His activity increases with every move.

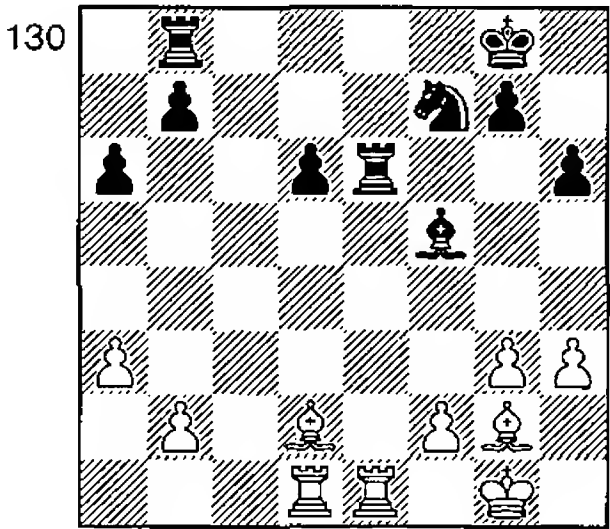
- 21... ♔xf5
22. ♘xe4 ♘f7
23. ♙b3 ♖ab8
24. ♔d2 ♙e6

Black decides to enter an endgame; however, after the exchange of queens,

the two white bishops are much more important than Black’s advantage on the wing. Black could have gained counter-play by 24 ...♔e6 25. ♙c2 ♔f5 26. ♙c1 ♙d7 27. ♘xd6 ♘xd6 28. ♙h2 ♙f7.

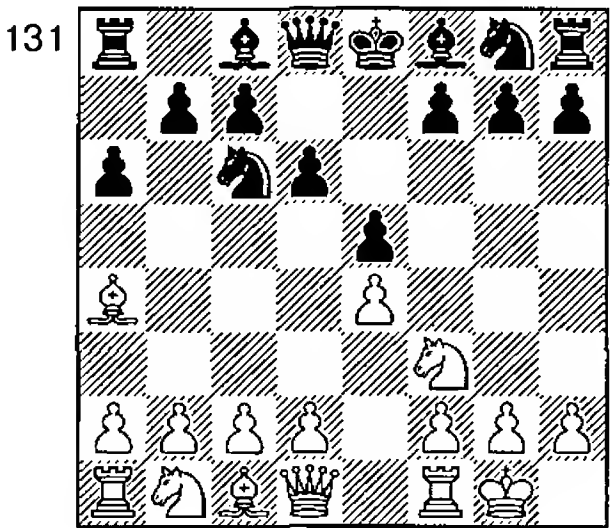
25. ♙xe6 ♖xe6
26. ♘xd6 cxd6

Black has to take a pawn, as other continuations are even worse: 26...♖xd6 27. ♔f4; 26...♖xe1+ 27. ♖xe1 ♘xd6 28. ♖e7 ♘e8 29. ♔d5+ ♙h7 30. ♔f4.



27. ♔d5 ♖xe1+ 28. ♖xe1 ♙f8 29. ♖c1 ♘d8 30. ♖c7 ♔xe6 31. ♔xe6 ♘e6 32. ♖d7 ♘g5 33. ♔xg5 hxg5 34. ♖xd6 ♖c8 35. ♙g2 ♖c5 36. ♖b6 ♖c7 37. ♙f3 ♖f7+ 38. ♙g4 ♖xf2 39. ♖xb7 ♖h2 40. a4 a5 41. ♖b5 1-0

No. 42: Extravagant Wing Play



Q. Can Black play 5...g5 in this position?

5... g5?

In the opening it is important to focus on developing the pieces and on the need to develop them as close to the center as possible. The chessplayer should also think about the king's safety and the need to castle quickly. It is also necessary to refrain from activity on the flank if the center is not closed. Alas, all of this advice was ignored by Black in the game **Suetin—Bondarevsky** (USSR Championship 1963).

6. d4! ...

If White had selected a slow line such as 6. c3, then Black's move may have been justified after a further 6...g4 7. g1e1 g7, followed by ...h7-h5-h4. However, when your opponent launches a premature flank operation in the opening, it is often possible to strike a timely blow in the center.

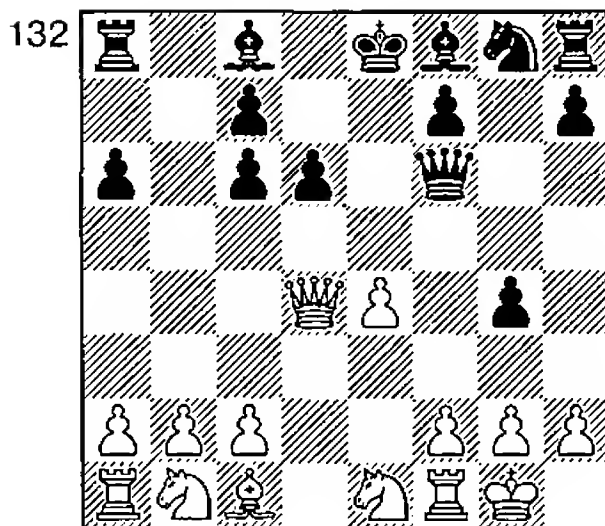
Controlling the center is important because it allows one to create more effective threats and the opponent who is trying to play on the flank will be compelled to turn his attention to defense. Capturing the initiative in this way often allows the attacker to attack the king directly, as in this game, or to redirect the attack from the center to the side where the opponent created a weakness.

6... g4
7. gxc6+ bxc6
8. e1 exd4
9. xd4 f6

(See Diagram 132)

10. a4! e7

On 10...d7, there follows 11. a5. And the best square for the knight is al-



ready occupied by the queen. Therefore, Black's move is justified.

11. c3 d7

12. d5! was threatened.

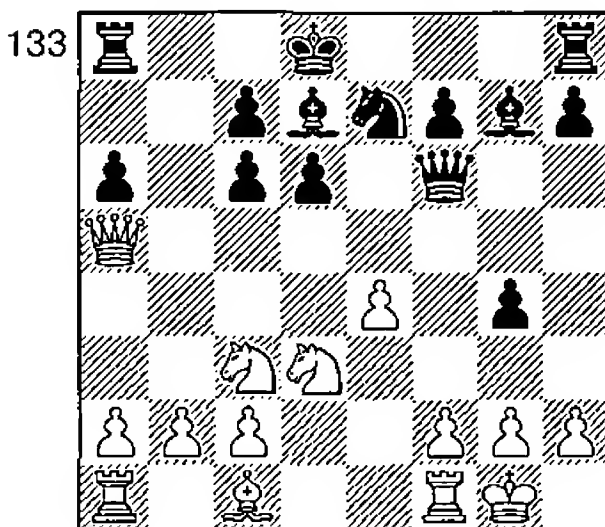
12. a5! ...

Black must either forfeit his right to castle or lose material.

12... d8

The c7 square is difficult to defend any other way.

13. d3 g7



14. e5! ...

Black's king looks safe enough, shielded by its pieces and pawns, but if Black accepts this pawn sacrifice, then the squares e4 and c5 will be at White's disposal (14...dxe5 15. c5!) and the d-file will be opened for the rooks.

14... f5

15. ♖e1 ...

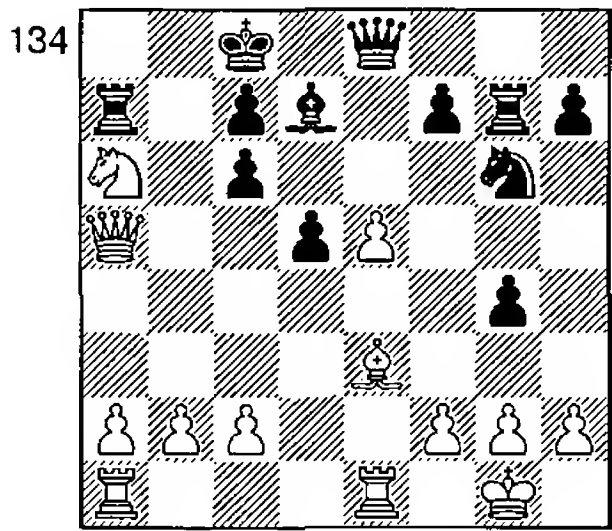
The second rook is going to occupy the d-file. This move is necessary to support the knight on e4 from where it will threaten the d6-pawn and keep an eye on g5 as well.

15... d5

Black plays to control e4; however, now the dark squares are weak and his position soon collapses. Other continuations have their drawbacks as well; for example, 15... ♗g6 16. ♖e4 ♙c8 17. ♗g3 ♙e6 18. exd6 and White is much better.

16. ♗e2 ♗g6
17. ♗g3 ♙e6
18. ♖g5+ ♙c8
19. ♗c5 ♙e8
20. ♗h5 ♖g8
21. ♗xg7 ♖xg7
22. ♗xa6 ♖a7
23. ♖e3 ...

The last several moves have increased White's initiative; each move was made in connection with a threat. As a result White nets a pawn, with more to follow.



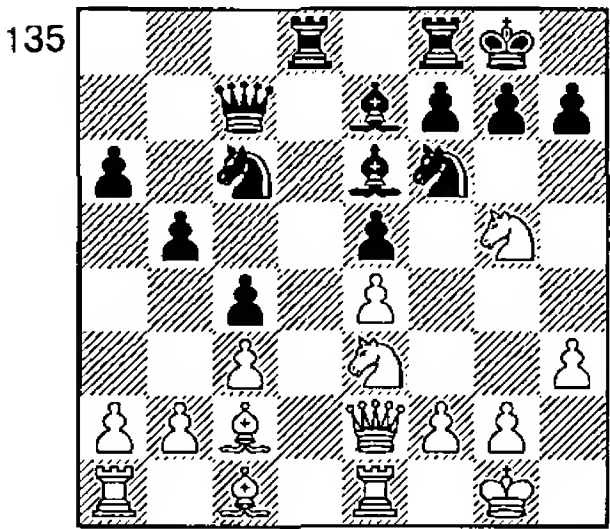
23... ♖xa6

In case of 23... ♖b7, White plays 24. ♗xc7 ♖xc7 25. ♙a8#.

24. ♙a6+ ♙d8 25. ♖g5+ ♗e7 26. ♖f6 ♖g6 27. a4 ♖c8 28. ♙d3 ♙d7 29.

a5 ♖b7 30. b4 ♗g8 31. c4 ♙e6 32. ♙d4 ♙e8 33. b5 cxb5 34. cxb5 ♗e7 35. ♙c5 ♙d7 36. ♖ec1 1-0

No. 43:
The Good Side of Doubled Pawns



Q. Is White's attack on the light-squared bishop cause for concern?

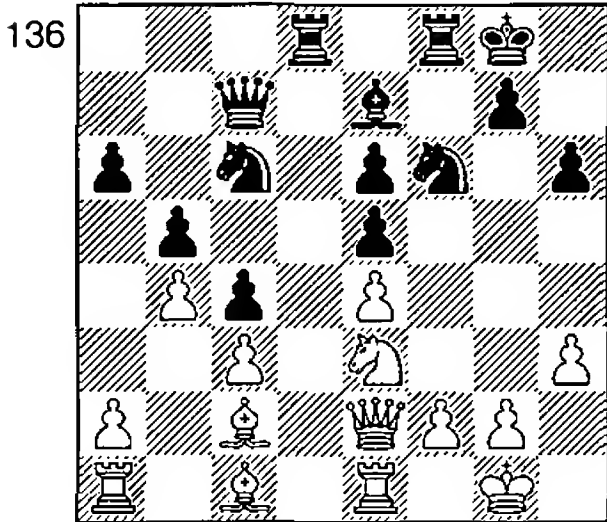
17... h6!

In the game **Fischer–Kholmov** (Capablanca Memorial 1965), Black paradoxically allows White to spoil his pawn structure and gain the bishop pair. Black's point is that in the ensuing position White's pieces stand passively and Black controls all the key points. Moreover, the doubled pawns can only be a factor in the endgame, but there is still the middlegame to come.

18. ♗xe6 ♗xe6
19. b4? ...

On general principle it appears that blocking the queenside and taking away the important square c5 from the black knight enables White to quietly build up an offensive on the kingside. However, the balance of the game proves this to be deceptive. The modest 19. a4 or 19. b3 were better. In

the latter case, Black could ignore the threat to capture on c4, as he has the excellent answer ...b5-b4, with good play for the pawn. The complications arising after 19. b3 ♖c5 20. ♔f1 ♖c8 21. a4 ♜f7 22. axb5 axb5 23. bxc4 d4 are also good for Black.



19... ♖d4!!

The American grandmaster missed this shot, which gives Black the initiative.

20. cxd4 exd4

21. a3 ...

When contemplating his nineteenth move, Black had to reckon with the rather poisonous 21. e5, when it is impossible to take the pawn with the queen in view of 22. ♜f5. However, Black had prepared 21...d3 22. exf6 ♗xf6. The variations are long, but all of them give Black the edge. After 19. a4 this would not have been possible.

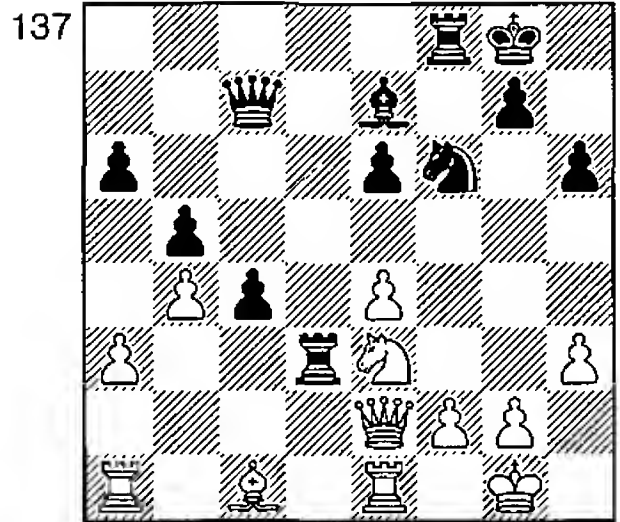
21... d3

22. ♗xd3 ♗xd3!

This is more solid than 22...cxd3, when 23. ♜a2! ♜c6 24. ♜f5! is trouble.

(See Diagram 137)

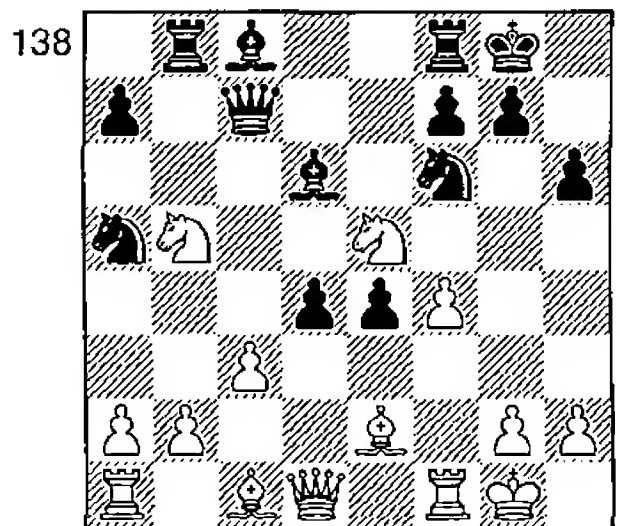
Black has a decisive advantage. He has a passed pawn and his rooks control



the open files. In addition, even if White moves his pawn to the fifth rank, it will remain weak. I'd like to comment on the rest of the game in its entirety, but space is not unlimited.

23. ♜g4 ♜h7 24. e5 ♜xg4 25. ♜e4+ g6 26. ♜xg4 ♜f5 27. ♜e4 ♜d7 28. ♜e3 ♜d5! 29. ♜xd5 ♜xd5 30. f4 g5 31. g3 gxf4 32. gxf4 ♜f8 33. ♜g2 ♜g6 34. ♜g1 ♜d3 35. ♜f3+ ♜f5 36. ♜g7 ♜d8 37. ♜b7 ♜g8 38. ♜b8 ♜g7 39. a4 h5 40. axb5 axb5 41. ♜xb5 ♜h4 42. ♜e2 ♜g2+ 43. ♜f1 ♜h2 44. ♜g1 ♜e2 45. ♜b6 c3 46. ♜f1 ♜h2 0-1

No. 44: Central Pawn Roller



Q. How can Black retain the pawn duo in the center?

Chapter II

François-André Danican Philidor wrote in 1749 that pawns are the soul of chess. Many moons later, chess theory has changed radically, but the pawn structure is still of supreme importance to a chess fight. In the game **Arnold—Chigorin** (St. Petersburg 1885), Black's central pawn phalanx bears down on the opponent's position.

16... ♖xb5!

17. ♗xb5 ♜b6

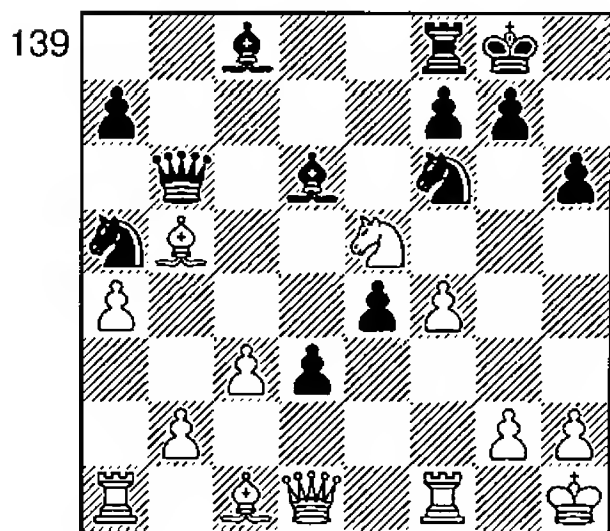
18. a4 ...

Black would win back his material after 18. ♗a4 dxc3+ 19. ♔h1 cxb2 20. ♖bl bxc1 ♕.

18... d3+

18... dxc3 is clearly inferior.

19. ♔h1 ...



19... a6!

Black has excellent compensation for the exchange. The two connected passed pawns in the center are especially good. Black's last move strengthens his position even more by forcing the exchange of the powerful centralized knight.

20. ♞c4 ♜xc4

21. ♗xc4 ♞g4!

The poor coordination of White's remaining pieces will prove fatal. A very

important component of the attack is to exchange the opponent's best pieces!

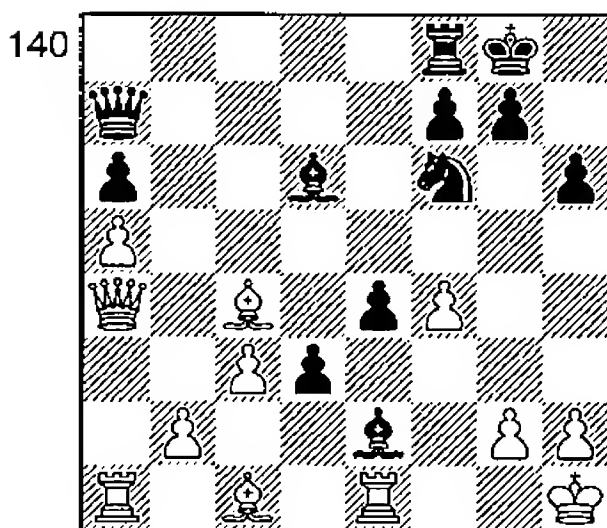
22. a5 ...

After 22. ♕e1, there follow 22... ♗e2 and ... ♞g4!

22... ♕a7

23. ♕a4 ♗e2

24. ♖e1 ...



24 ... ♞g4!

The g4 square becomes a magnificent springboard for Black's pieces. The attack is too strong to defend against.

25. h3 ...

Chigorin creates a new threat with every move and firmly holds the initiative. On 25. ♗d2?, Black has the delightful smothered mate 25... ♞f2+ 25. ♔g1 ♞h3+ 26. ♔h1 ♕g1+ 27. ♖g1 ♞f2#.

25... ♕f2

26. ♗d2 ♗c5

Mate is threatened from many directions, e.g. 27... ♕g3 28. hxc4 ♕h4#.

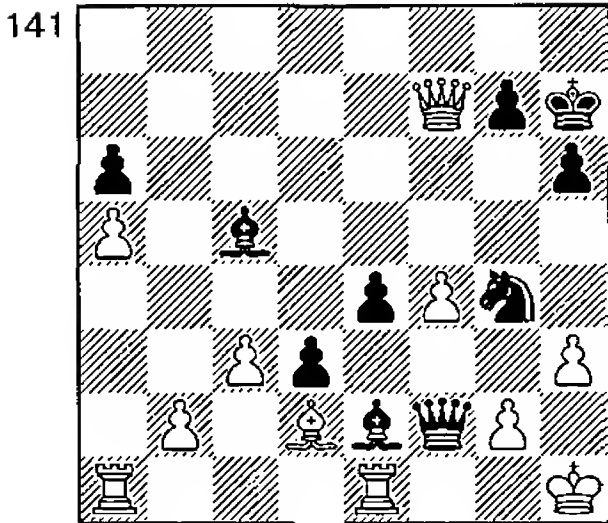
27. ♗xf7 ...

White could have resigned here, but then the chess world would have missed out on seeing the remarkable finish.

27... ♖xf7

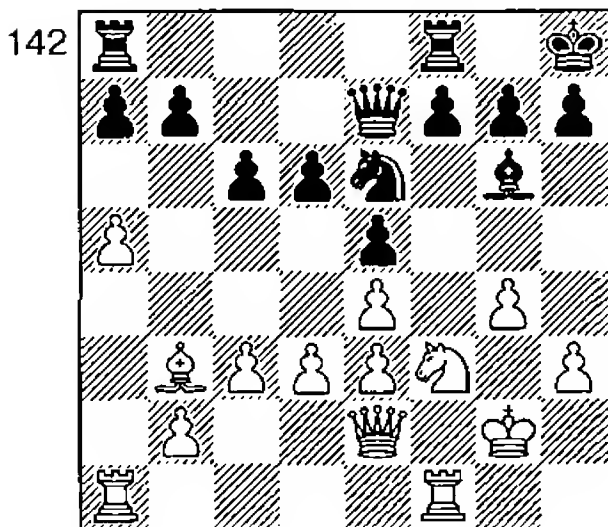
28. ♕e8 ♔h7

29. ♕xf7 ...



29... ♔xg2+!!
 30. ♔xg2 ♙f3+
 31. ♔f1 ♙b2#

No. 45: Another Weakened Kingside



Q. Evaluate the diagram position and support your conclusions with variations.

In the game **Salwe–Rubinstein** (Fifth All-Russia Championship 1907), White's pawn structure has significant defects. White has doubled pawns on the e-file, and the h3- and g4-pawns can become serious weaknesses. This deprives the white center of mobility and creates good preconditions for Black's attack on the e4-pawn by ...d6-

d5. Therefore, Black's position is to be preferred.

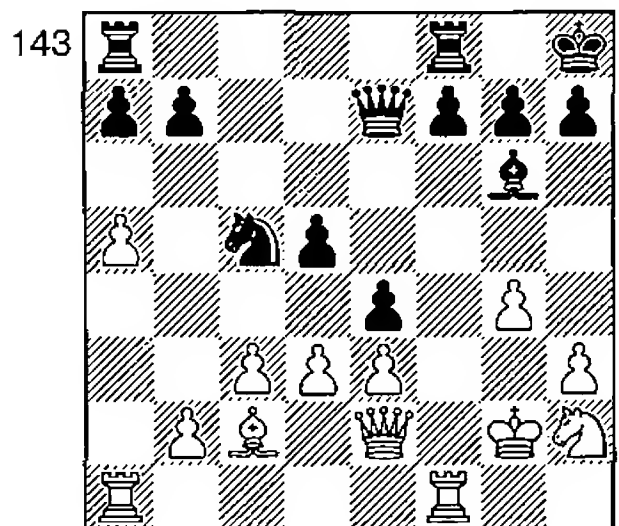
18 ... ♘c5!
 19. ♙c2 d5!

It is best to meet an insufficiently prepared wing attack with a counter-strike in the center. White's next move is forced, as 20. b4 is met by 20...dxe4. Thus, Black's first task is completed: White's forward e-pawn is eliminated.

20. exd5 cxd5
 21. ♙b2? ...

A bad idea. White should accept an isolated pawn and play 21. e4!.

21 ... e4!



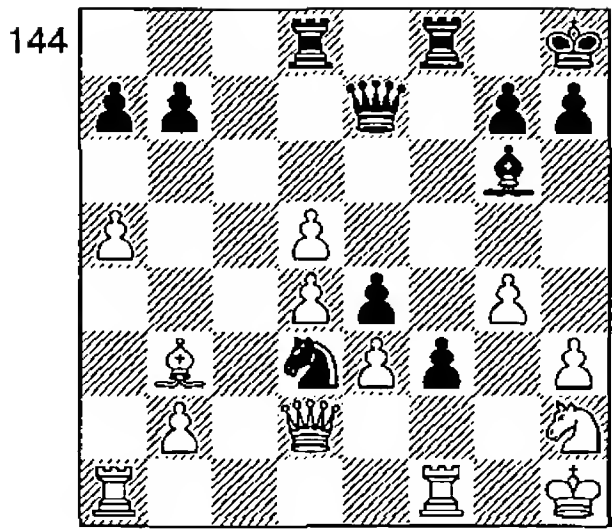
22. d4 ♘d3
 23. ♙b3 ...

White tries to play against the d5-pawn, but Black's play against the white king is more effective.

23 ... ♖ad8
 24. ♔d2 f5
 25. c4 f4
 26. cxd5 f3+
 27. ♔b1 ...

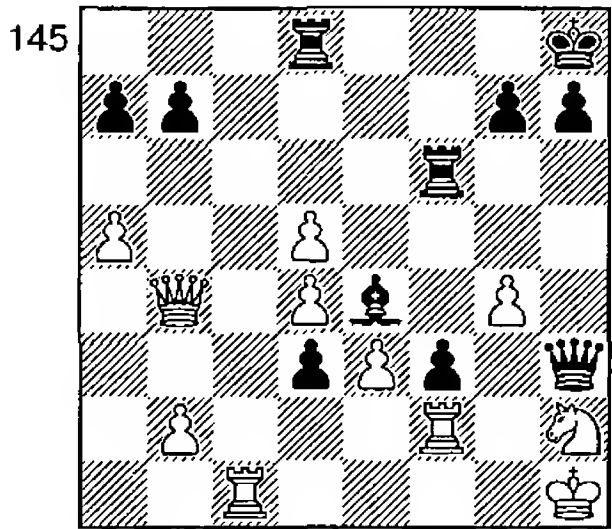
(See Diagram 144)

27 ... ♗h4
 28. ♙c4 ♗xh3
 29. ♙xd3 exd3
 30. ♖f2 ♙e4



31. ♖c1 ♗f6
32. ♗b4 ...

Rubinstein has conducted the attack vigorously and has a big advantage. A series of brilliant blows follows.



32 ... d2!

The straightforward 32...♖h6 is weaker because of 33. ♗e7.

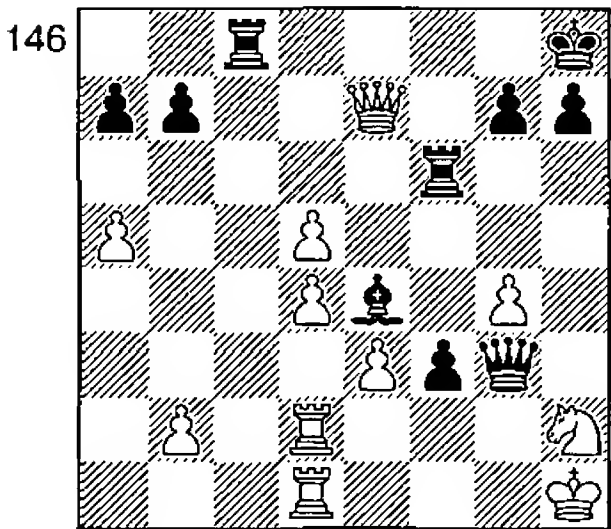
33. ♖d1 ...

The d2-pawn is immune from capture. It is obvious that White cannot take with the rook and on 33. ♗xd2 there follows 33...♖h6 34. ♖g1 ♗g3+ 35. ♖f1 ♗xg4.

33 ... ♗g3
34. ♗e7 ♖c8

Danish grandmaster Bent Larsen once noted that, “all the pieces must participate in the attack.” This is fully applicable to this position and the decisive combination is imminent.

35. ♖fxd2 ...



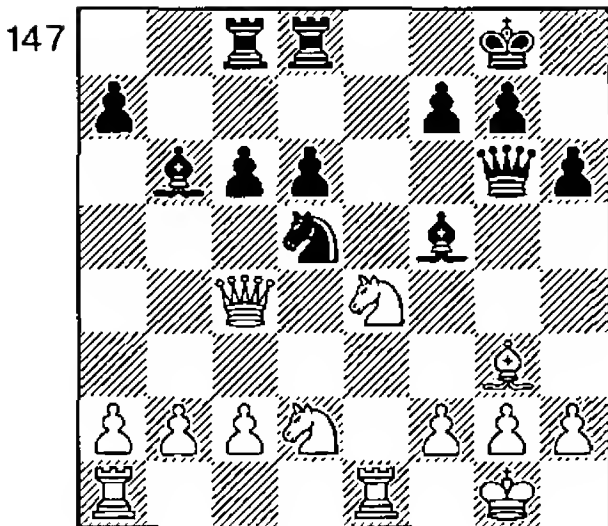
35 ... ♗e1+!
36. ♖xe1 f2
37. ♗xe4 fxe1♗
38. ♗g2 ♗xd2+
0-1

White resigned. Rubinstein skillfully took advantage of the pawn weaknesses in White’s position.

Chapter III

Position Play

No. 46: Prophylaxis



Q. Evaluate the diagram position and suggest a plan for White.

This is an open position, so Black's bishops are a force to be reckoned with. Nevertheless, White's position is slightly better. His advantage depends on the superior mobilization of his forces. The white rooks can be moved to the e- and d-files, while the black rooks are compelled to take more modest positions on the d- and c-files. Black's pawn structure is not impressive either, as the c- and d-pawns require constant attention.

21. ♔a4 ...

White moves the queen to avoid a potential fork from the advance of the d6-pawn. This continuation is an example of *prophylaxis*. The ability to consider your opponent's plans and to react accordingly is one distinguishing aspect of a skilled chessplayer. It is human nature to get carried away by one's own intentions and forget the opponent's presence, and the penalty for such lapses can sometimes be severe. That is why the development of prophylactic thinking should be paramount to anyone who is starting out in chess. It fosters both increased skill and better results.

21... c5

This move seems to depreciate the b6-bishop, but it is the strongest. White was going to improve his position by ♖ad1 and then c2-c4. The move 21...c5 makes possible both ...c5-c4 and 22...♗b4.

22. ♗f3! ...

This is the only way to keep some advantage.

22... ♕xe4

23. ♖xe4 ♗b4

24. ♖a1 d5
25. ♜4e2 d4

This is premature. Taking e5 under control by 25...♞c6 was necessary.

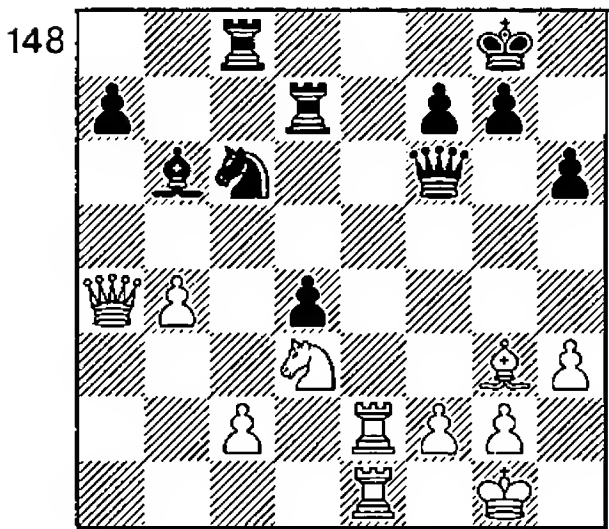
26. ♞e5 ♙f6
27. a3 ♞c6
28. ♞d3! ...

It is possible to win by having kept only the knights.

28... ♙a5
29. ♜d1 ♙b6
30. ♜de1 ♙a5
31. b4 ...

This advance could have been made earlier, but the players repeated moves. Capablanca advised that one should do this as a way to save time for reflection and as a psychological ploy to discover your opponent's intentions.

31... cxb4
32. axb4 ♙b6
33. h3 ♜d7



34. ♙b5! ...

Now the time has come to shift the queen over to the kingside.

34... ♜cd8
35. ♙h5! ...

The queen is a long-range piece and only needs one move to jump from one flank to another. Now White threatens

to advance the b-pawn, which would make e5 accessible to the white knight. However, Black's time trouble, the constant companion to defeat, leads him to commit an error.

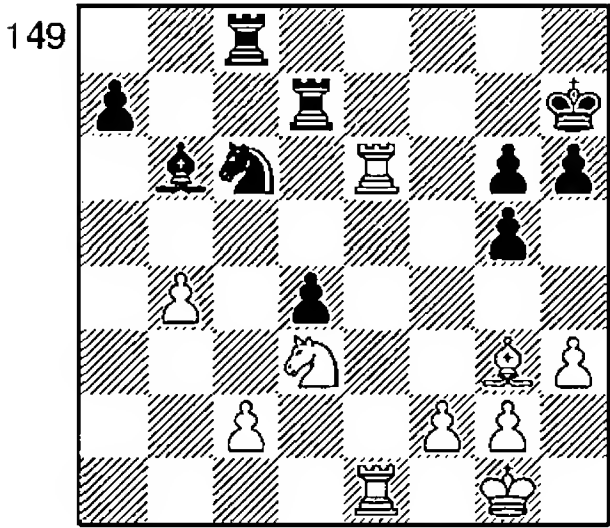
35... ♙h7

Black prepares ...g7-g6 to chase away the queen, but this allows White to force Black into a bad ending.

36. ♙h4 g5
37. ♙g3 ♙g6
38. ♙xg6+ fxg6

38...♙xg6 leads to the loss of material after 39. b5 and 40. ♞e5+.

39. ♜e6 ♜c8

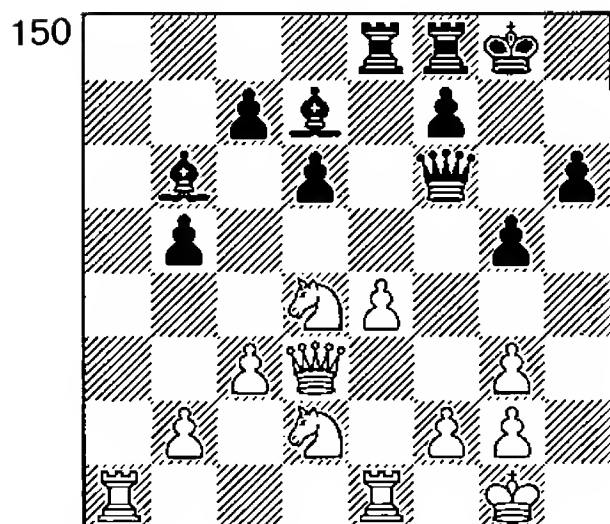


Here, in the game Aronin—A. Makarov (Moscow 1965), Black's flag fell and he acknowledged defeat. One possible continuation is 40. b5 ♞a5 41. ♞e5 ♜g7 42. ♞g4 h5 43. ♞f6+ ♙h6 44. ♜e8 ♜xe8 45. ♜xe8 ♜f7 46. ♙e5!.

No. 47: The Price of Obstinacy
(See Diagram 150)

Q. Can White's two knights fight Black's bishop pair?

21. ♞2f3 ...



Knights need reliable outposts in order to be effective against bishops. Thus, the maneuver 21 ♖f1, with the idea of redeploying to d5 or f5, deserved attention. Black could prevent this by 21... ♗e5, but after 22. ♘f3 ♗e6 23. e5 dxe5 24. ♖xe5 ♗f6 25. ♖xe8 ♙xe8 26. ♘e3, White has the better chances.

21... b4

22. ♘f5 ...

It was necessary to admit the inaccuracy on the previous move and return the knight to d2. White might then be able to keep a dynamic balance in the position. Obstinacy can be costly. Now Black gets a pawn advantage in the center, and White only has illusory chances of an attack on the kingside.

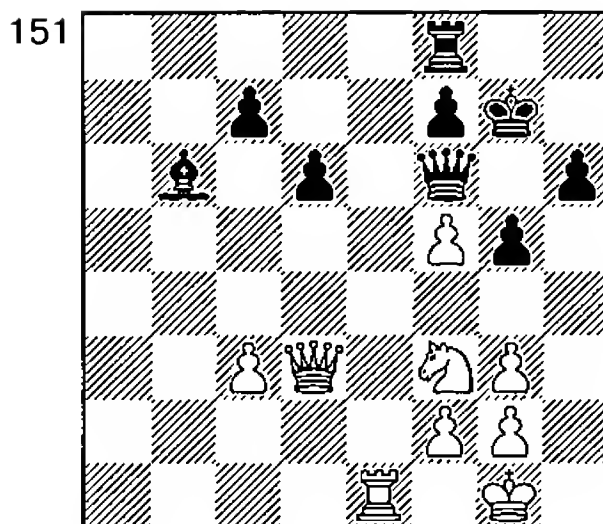
22... ♙xf5

23. exf5 bxc3

24. bxc3 ♖xe1+

25. ♖xe1 ♙g7!

The time has not yet come for occupying the a-file: 25... ♖a8 could be met vigorously by 26. ♘h2 ♖a4 27. ♗f3 ♖c4 28. ♘g4 ♗xc3 29. ♖e8+ ♘h7 30. ♗d5 ♖xg4 31. ♗xf7+ ♗g7 32. ♗e6.



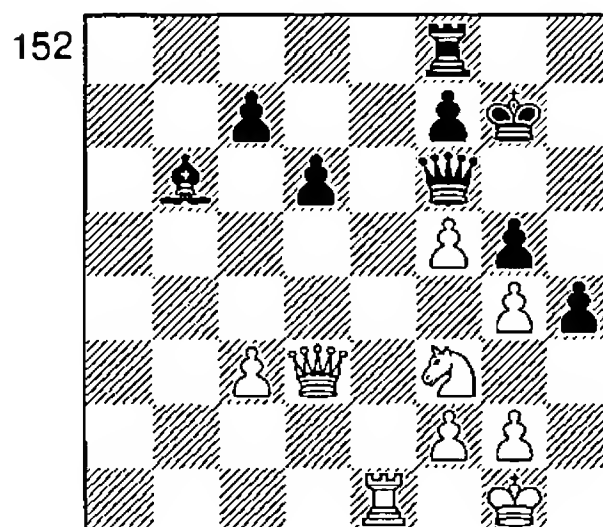
26. ♘h2 ...

Necessary was 26. ♖a1. The e-file, which Black would receive in exchange, would be less valuable to him.

26... h5

27. g4 h4

28. ♘f3 ...



28... ♖a8!

Black's long-range pieces will soon take aim at White's vulnerable pawns at c3, f2, and g4. In the game **Dolmatov–Beliavsky** (Moscow 1990), the fact that there are fewer pieces on the board did not reduce the intensity of the fight.

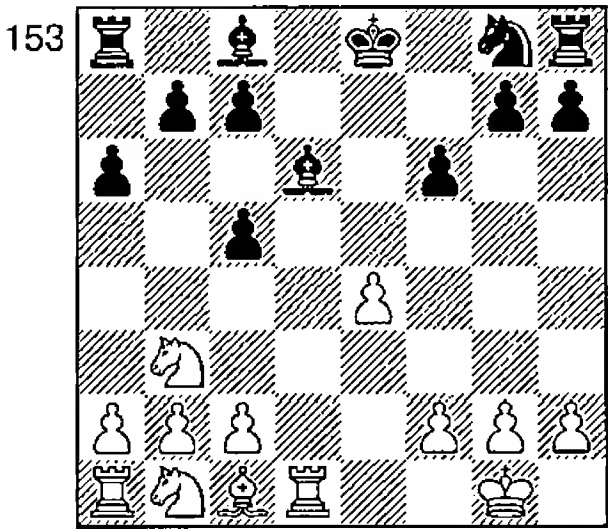
29. ♗d2? ...

The decisive error. The only hope for salvation was 29. ♗c4, and if 29... ♖a5,

then 30. ♖b3 ♜c5 31. c4 ♞a5 32. ♔f1, with a fortress on the light squares.

29... ♜a4
30. ♘h2 ♜c4
31. ♖c1 ♞a5 32. ♖e3 d5 33. ♖e8 ♜xc3 34. ♖d7 ♞e5 35. ♜d1 ♞xh2+ 36. ♔xh2 c6 37. ♜e1 ♜xg4 38. g3 hxg3 +39. fxg3 ♜b4 40. ♔g2 ♜b2+ 41. ♔h3 ♜b4 0-1

No. 48: The Spanish Exchange I



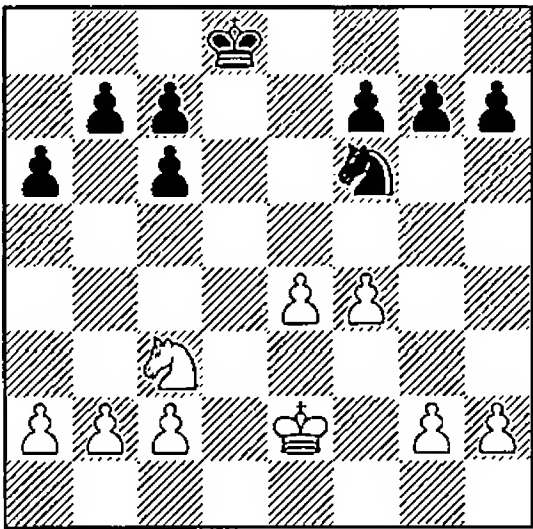
Q. Suggest a continuation for White.

10. ♘a5! ...

In the game **Fischer–Portisch** (La Habana Olympiad 1966), the Spanish Exchange variation was played. This variation was also favored by the second world champion, Emanuel Lasker, who used it to defeat many an opponent, including even Capablanca. It is most curious that opening reference books rate it as an “equal game,” because Black receives the strong bishop pair as compensation for his doubled pawns. Yet in practice things are not so simple. White has an effective strategic plan of creating a passed pawn on the kingside, which hangs over Black like the sword of Damocles.

If one were to remove all the pieces from the board, White would win the pawn ending: White’s three queenside pawns are equivalent to Black’s four, while the kingside pawn majority will decide. The question is how to eliminate the pieces. White need not rush to do this; he can use his space advantage to maneuver his pieces, always keeping in mind the transition into a pawn ending.

Here is an example from the game **Ljublinsky–Erukhimov** (Kandalaksha 1959):



19. ♔f3 ♗e7 20. g4 ♔e6 21. ♘e2 c5 22. e5 ♘d5 23. ♔e4 ♞b6 24. f5 ♖e7 25. h4 c6 26. g5 g6 27. f6+ ♔d7 28. ♘f4 ♞a4 29. e6+ fxe6 30. f7 ♗e7 31. ♞xe6 ♖xf7 32. ♞d8+ ♔e7 33. ♞xb7 ♞xb2 34. ♞c5 a5 35. ♔d4 ♘d1 36. a4 ♔d6 37. ♞b7+ ♔c7 38. ♞xa5 ♞b2 39. ♔e5 ♞a4 40. ♔f6 ♖b6 41. ♞xc6 ♖xc6 42. ♔g7 and Black resigned.

Considering that, after 1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3, the e5-pawn is defended indirectly, some theorists even began recommending the preventive 2...a6, to nip the attack of the “Spanish bishop” in the bud!

Fischer’s tenth move is very unpleasant for Black. Though the knight goes to the edge of the board, it hinders Black’s

forces and stands ready to transfer to c4.

10... b5

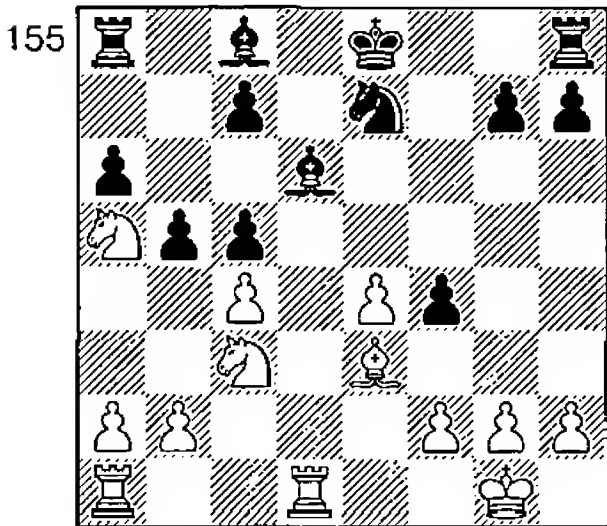
Black controls c4, but creates a target for the opponent to attack.

11. c4 ♘e7

12. ♖e3 f5

Measures must be taken against a possible attack on the c5-pawn.

13. ♘c3 f4



14. e5! ♙xe5

15. ♙xc5 ...

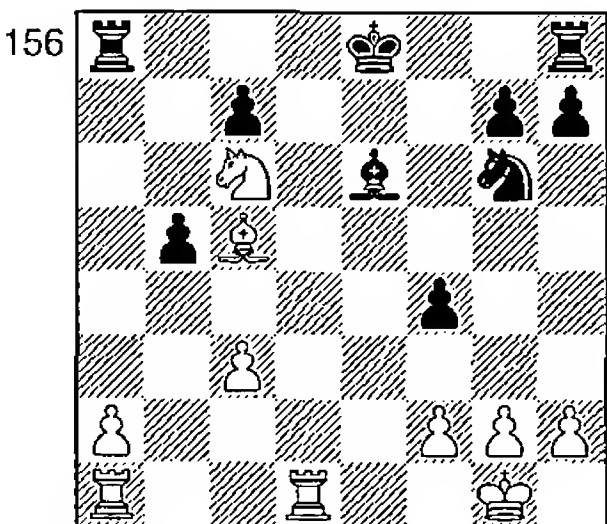
Black has got rid of the doubled pawns, but in return now White has the strong threat of ♖e1.

15... ♙xc3

16. bxc3 ♘g6

17. ♘c6 ♙e6

18. cxb5 axb5



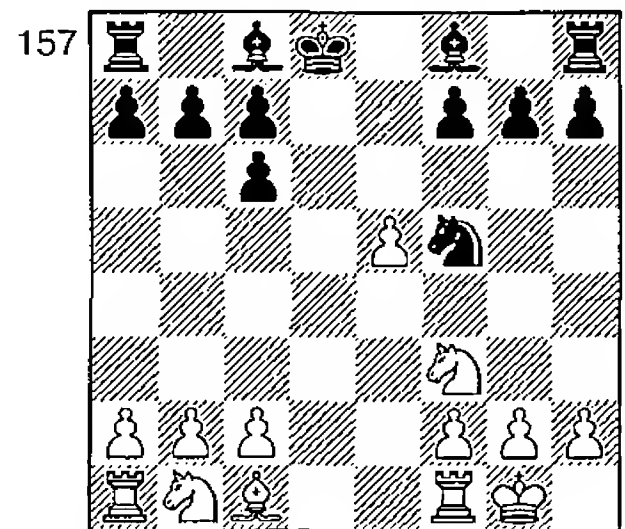
19. ♘a7! ...

In chess it is always important to find new objects for attack; this time it is the pawn on b5. White comes away from this simple tactical operation with an extra pawn, which he subsequently utilizes.

19... ♖b8 20. ♖db1 ♙f7 21. ♘xb5 ♖hd8 22. ♖b4 ♙xa2 23. ♘xc7 ♖bc8 24. h4 ♖d2 25. ♙b6 f3 26. ♙e3 ♖e2 27. ♘b5 ♖a8 28. h5 ♘e5 29. ♖f4+ ♙e7 30. ♖d1 ♖c8 31. ♖e4 ♙f6 32. ♖d6+ ♙f5 33. ♖f4+ ♙g5 34. ♖xf3+ 1-0

This game gave rise to a deep study of the Spanish Exchange variation that continues to this day.

No. 49: The Spanish Exchange II



Q. Evaluate the position and suggest a plan for White.

The uncrowned eighteenth-century champion André Philidor noted that the arrangement of pawns is critical to the development of a chess fight. This idea is still completely valid in our day. As Capablanca once pointed out, “opening variations are often rejected simply because bad pawn formations arise in them.”

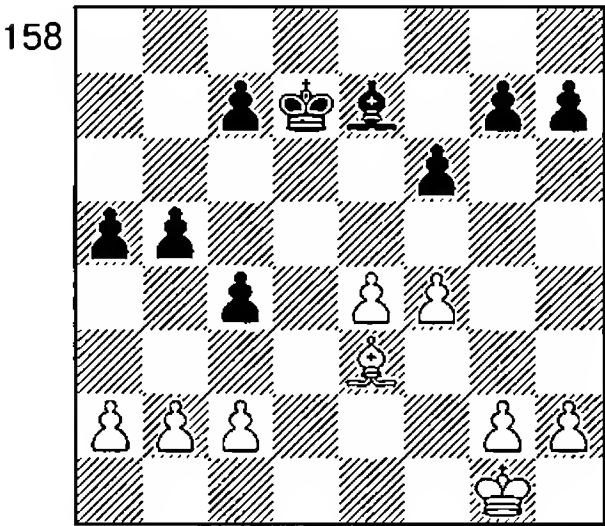
Our example, taken from the game **Gulko—Romanishin** (USSR Championship 1975), testifies to the fact that the pawn structure defines one’s plan.

9. ♖c3 ...

In the position that has arisen, a beginner will see mainly that Black has lost the right to castle because the king has already moved. But this is of no great value in the given position, as the queens have left the board. However, we need to remember that castling does more than safeguard the king — it is also used to activate a rook, and Black still has to do that in this game.

Let’s consider the pawn structure for a moment. White is better in the center and on the kingside. Having four pawns against three on the kingside lets White create a passed pawn in the ending. Black cannot do likewise on the queenside without the opponent’s cooperation. If we imagine that all the pieces are traded off and that the kings are posted in the center, then we must conclude that the current pawn structure gives the edge to White, as he can create a passed pawn. The same holds true for knight and bishop endings.

As it is easier to illustrate by means of an example, I will cite the end of the game **Grodzensky—Koshil** (corr. 1982):



23. ♖f2 a4 24. ♖f3 ♕d6 25. g4 b4 26. h4 h6 27. b3! cxb3 28. cxb3 axb3 29. axb3 c5 30. ♖e2 ♖c6 31. ♖d3 ♖b5 32. ♕c1 ♕c7 33. h5 ♕d6 34. g5 hxg5 35. e5 ♕e7 36. exf6 gxf6 37. h6 ♕f8 38. fxg5 fxg5 39. ♕xg5 c4+ 40. bxc4 ♖a4 41. h7 ♕g7 42. ♕h6 ♕h8 43. ♕f8 b3 44. ♖d2 ♕b2 45. ♕d6 ♖a5 46. ♕a3 1-0.

Black naturally plays to counter his opponent’s plans. He should not accept simplification of the position or the activation of White’s pawns. The unopposed light-squared bishop on c8 is an important defensive asset.

This is the general reasoning. But it defines the plans for both sides. Further trades (especially that of the light-squared bishop) favor White. So he should prepare the pawn advance and create a passed pawn at the right time. Black needs to arrange his pieces so as to keep the opponent’s forces at bay.

9... h6

Black prepares to play the bishop to e6. This would have been bad right away because of 10... ♕e6 11. ♖g5!.

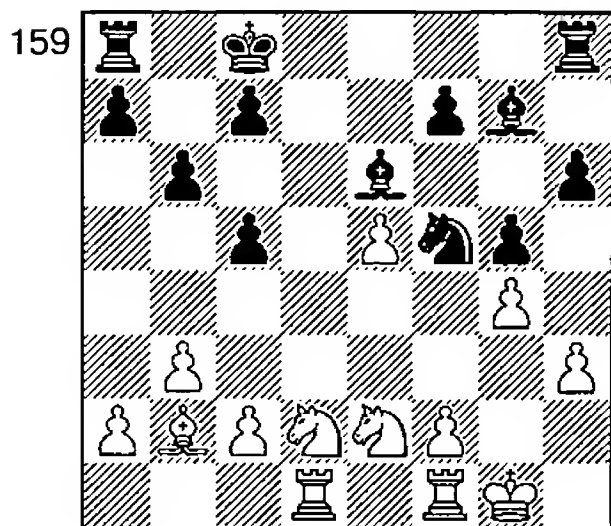
10. b3 ...

Now White needs to decide on which diagonal to place the bishop. The diagonal c1-h6 is not good. At e3 it comes under fire from the knight on f5, and this exchange would not benefit White. To place the bishop on f4 means to assist Black with the counterstroke ...g7-g5. Putting the piece on the a1-h8 diagonal avoids all these problems. As a bonus, the b3-pawn controls c4 and limits the activity of Black’s e6-bishop.

10... ♕e6
11. ♕b2 ♖c8
12. h3 c5

Black takes the center squares under control. If he tries to do without this move, then after 12... b6 13. g4 ♖e7 14. ♘d4 White will improve his position.

13. ♖ad1 b6
14. ♘e2 g5
15. ♘d2 ♙g7
16. g4 ...



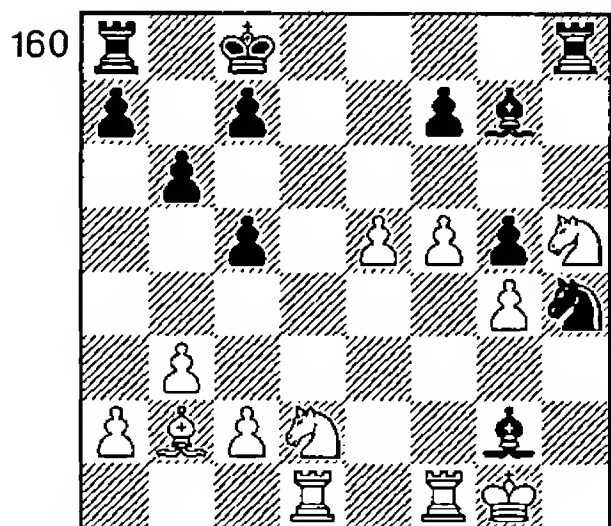
16... ♘h4
17. f4 h5

In case of 17... gxf4 18. ♘xf4 ♘g6 19. ♘xe6 fxe6, White will play 20. ♘e4 with an edge.

18. ♘g3 hxg4

No better is 18... gxf4 19. ♖xh5 ♖xh5.

19. f5 ♙d5
20. hxg4 ♙g2
21. ♘h5! ...



21... ♙xf1
22. ♖xf1 ♖d8
23. ♘e4 ♙h6
24. ♙c1 ...

The complications resulting from White's move 21. ♘h5! have abated. The upshot is that Black's one active piece, the light-squared bishop, has been eliminated, giving White control of the important central square e4. Also, the arrangement of Black's remaining pieces is tragicomic; the bishop on g7 is especially pitiful, and the knight won't be able to take part in the fight anytime soon. Thus, Black's temporary material advantage is of little significance. After all, it is impossible to defend the g5-pawn.

24... ♙b7
25. ♘hf6 ...

White takes g8 under control to win the pawn at his convenience. At the same time, the knight defends its colleague on e4.

25... ♖d4
26. ♙xg5 ♙xg5
27. ♘xg5 ♖f8
28. ♙h2! ...

The role of the king is discussed in Lutikov–Smejkal (No. 173) and Gulko–Romanishin.

28... ♖d2+
29. ♙g3 ♘g2

Black attempts to free the knight from its captivity on h4. But the hopelessness of his position is highlighted by the fact that there is no particular place to put the knight: It has no good squares.

30. ♖f2 ♘e3
31. ♖xd2 ♘f1+
32. ♙f4 ♘xd2
33. ♘f17 ♖h8
34. f6! c4

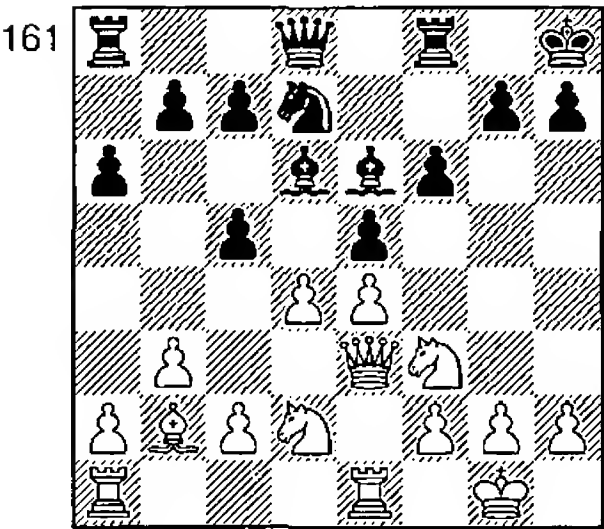
35. e6! ...

White finally carries out the decisive pawn break.

35... cxb3
36. cxb3 fxe6
37. f7 e5+
38. ♖xe5 1-0

I recommend considering these last two examples as one general theme.

No. 50: A Critical Decision



Q. Black has just played 13...c6-c5. Is this advance a) a gross positional error that deprives Black of counterplay; or b) a good move that allows Black to fight for a favorable outcome?

Alas, in the game **Hecht–Kostro** (Wijk aan Zee 1971), 13...c5 was a gross positional error. Black would have done well to continue 13...♞e7 or exchange on d4 first. Now Black’s dark-squared bishop becomes nothing more than a “big pawn,” and Black succumbs to a storm on the kingside.

14. d5 ♞f7
15. a4 ...

This advance secures c4 for the knight.

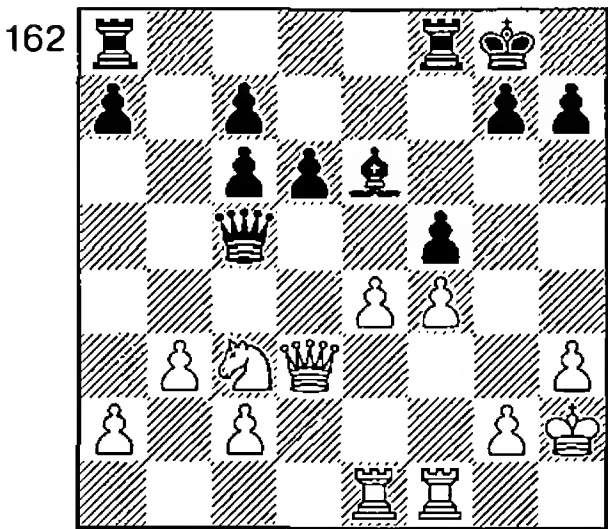
15... a5

Otherwise White plays a4-a5, increasing his space advantage.

16. ♞c4 ♞a6 17. ♞c3 b6 18. ♞h4 ♞e8 19. ♞f5 ♞f8 20. ♞ad1 ♞a7 21. f4 exf4 22. ♞xf4 ♞g6 23. ♞h4 ♞h5 24. ♞d3 ♞e5 25. ♞xe5 fxe5 26. ♞xe5 ♞xe5 27. ♞xe5 ♞xh4 28. ♞f1 ♞a8 29. ♞h3 ♞d6 30. ♞xh4 1-0

Black resigned. All this because of his thirteenth move!

No. 51: To Invite – or Deter – Pawn Advances?



Q. Here Black played 18...f7-f5. Is this move a) correct, leading to a good game; or b) mistaken, causing difficulties for Black?

In **Em. Lasker–E.Cohn** (St. Petersburg 1909), White has a considerable pawn superiority in the center and on the kingside. At the right moment, he can transfer the queen to g3 and either advance the f4-pawn to f5 or break with e4-e5.

Of course, this is no secret to Black. He is well aware of his isolated a7-pawn and of the doubled pawns on the c-file. So, based on the current situation, Black

should be building defensive fortifications on the kingside and preparing a counter-strike on the queenside or in the center.

However, 18...f6 was obligatory. This way Black could block the f-file, fortify the square e5, and open an escape route for the light-squared bishop if the need arises.

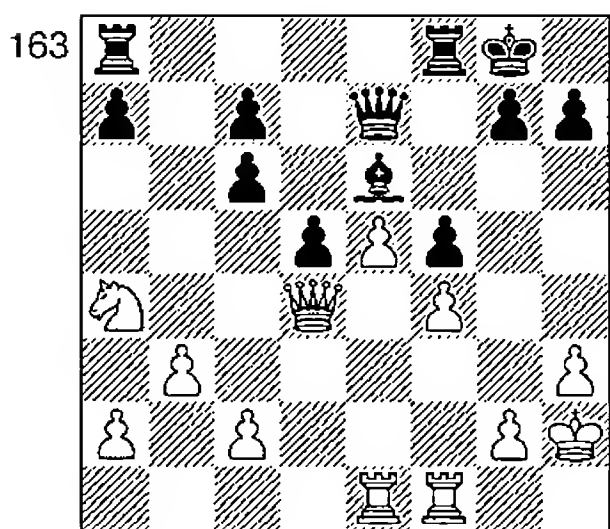
19. e5 d5?

Mistakes almost always come in pairs. Black should have played 19...♖ae8. Now White's pawn superiority in the center takes on new significance with the creation of the passed pawn on e5. Here Lasker could play 20. g4 and if 20...fxg4, then 21. f5. However, Black could keep things unclear with 20...♞e7 instead.

As Black's last two moves have created a number of new weaknesses (on the c5 and d4 squares), White drastically changes his plans. He places his pieces on these strongpoints. This example well illustrates the advantage of a knight over a bishop in closed positions.

20. ♞a4! ♞e7

21. ♞d4 ...



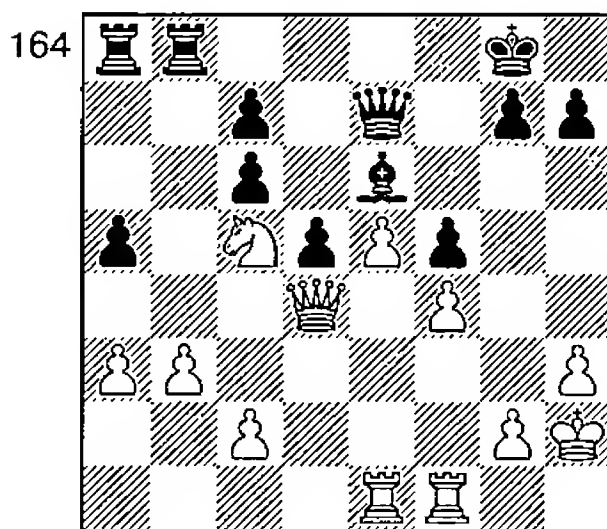
From here, White's centralized queen controls the fourth rank and the g1-a7 diagonal.

21... ♞f8

22. ♞c5 a5

Passively awaiting his fate. Now White can create another passed pawn, on the a-file.

23. a3 ...



Black is bound hand and foot. It is soon all over.

23... ♞f7

24. ♞a1 ♞b5

25. b4 ♞ab8

26. c3 ♞xc5

27. a4 was threatened, but after 26... axb4 27. axb4 White's rook could occupy the seventh rank. Black is an unenviable position: there is no wish to surrender, yet there is no move to play. If Black could have somehow proceeded otherwise, the game might have developed as follows: first White creates a passed a-pawn, then, with Black's forces focused on the queenside, White shifts operations to the kingside and opens the g-file where, because of White's space advantage, his major pieces can deploy before his opponent's can.

27. bxc5 ♞b5

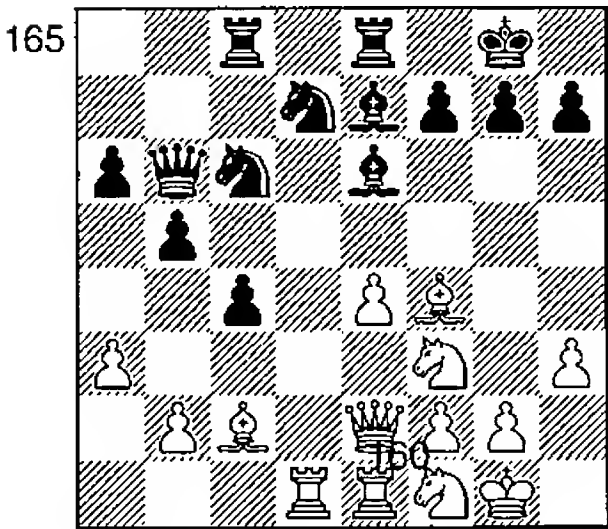
28. ♞ab1 ♞xc5

29. a4 1-0

Let's review what happened in this game. White threatened an offensive on the kingside, and in the process of meet-

ing this danger Black created new weaknesses. He disrupted the harmony of his forces, weakened a number of important points, and limited his bishop's mobility. White then switched plans and effectively refuted Black's strategy. This ability to switch plans under changing conditions is one indicator of genuine skill.

No. 52: Stereotyped Play



Q. How should White bring the f1-knight into play?

21. ♖e3? ...

It is dangerous to play a move based on general principles without calculating concrete variations. Here, in **Ljubojević–Trois** (Riga Interzonal 1979), White recalls a maneuver that has been carried out on countless occasions, whereby the knight maneuvers b1–d2–f1–e3–d5/f5. However, the strongest move in this position is to activate the c2-bishop by means of 21. e5!. This would also open the way for the knight: ♖f1–g3–e4, when the knight becomes very threatening to the black king.

Black loses at once if he replies 21... ♗f8 22. ♗xh7+ ♖xh7 23. ♖g5+ ♖g6 24. g4!. If 21... f6, then 22. exf6 ♗xf6 23.

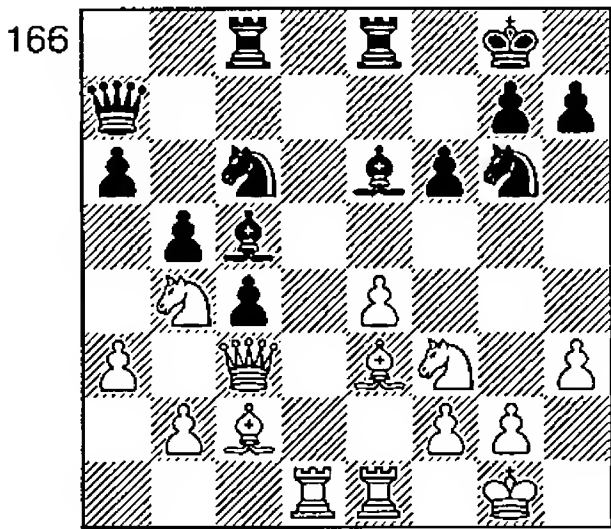
♖g5 ♗xg5 24. ♗xg5 ♖d4 25. ♖e3 with a big advantage for White. On 21... ♖c5, good is 22. ♖g5, and 21... ♗c5 can be met by the maneuver 22. ♖g3–e4.

With the game move White misses a good chance to win, and he throws away his advantage completely.

21... ♗c5
22. ♖d2 ♖f8
23. ♖d5 ♖a7
24. ♗e3 f6

Black deters the advance e4–e5.

25. ♖c3 ♖g6
Now Black firmly controls e5.
26. ♖b4 ...



Q. Should Black play 26... ♖e5, or 26... ♖xb4?

26... ♖ce5?

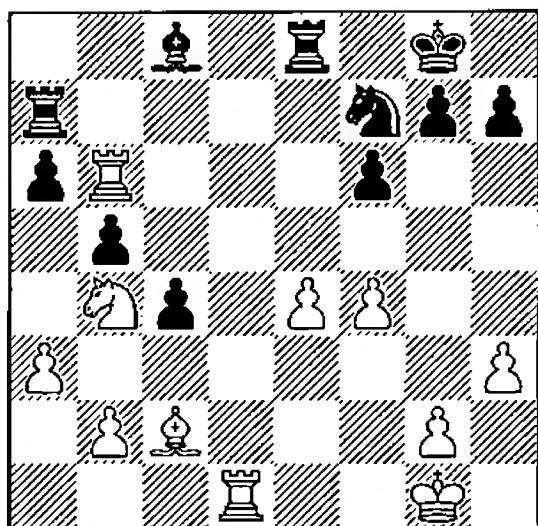
This decision allows White to enter a favorable ending. Black would have had equal chances after 26... ♖xb4 27. axb4 ♗xe3 28. ♖xe3 ♖cd8.

27. ♗xc5 ♖xf3+
28. ♖xf3 ♖xc5
29. ♖e3! ...

The threat of ♖xa6 compels Black to transition to an inferior ending.

29... ♖c7 30. ♖xa7 ♖xa7 31. ♖d6 ♗c8 32. ♖ed1 ♖e5 33. f4 ♖f7 34. ♖b6

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White's pieces are clearly more active than Black's. This guarantees the Yugoslav grandmaster enough of an edge to win.

34... ♖f8 35. ♔f2 ♘b7 36. ♚d4 ♙d8 37. ♙e3 ♙e7 38. g4 h6 39. h4 ♙xd4 40. ♙xd4 ♘d8 41. ♙c5 ♙c8 42. ♘d5+ ♙e8 43. e5

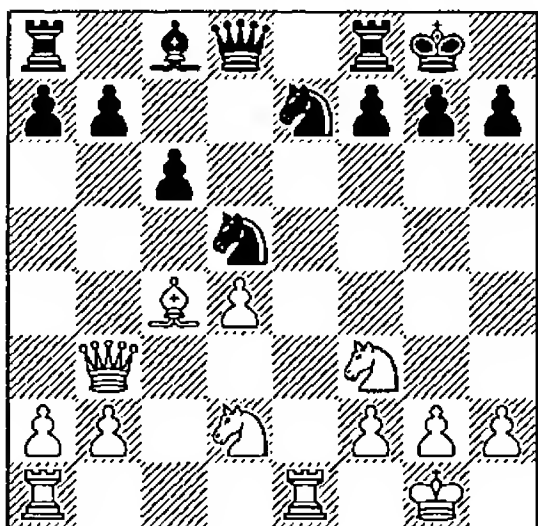
Better late than never.

43... ♘e6+ 44. ♙b4 a5+ 45. ♙c3 ♘c7 46. ♙g6+ ♙d8 47. ♙d6+ ♙d7 48. ♙b6 ♙e8 49. ♙xd7+ ♙xd7 50. ♙xd7 ♙xd7 51. e6+ 1-0

Black resigned, as he cannot meet the threat of 52. ♙xe8 and 53. ♙d4.

No. 53: A Seesaw Battle

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A. Who is better?

B. Is the white d-pawn strong or weak? Does it make White's position better or worse?

C. Who has the better practical chances?

There are no unequivocal answers to these questions. The winner will be the one who plays better. Here it is experience and imagination that will help the players to successfully navigate the position.

Nevertheless, it is still important to develop a plan. White can try to weaken the opponent's queenside by means of the pawn thrust a2-a4-a5-a6, and then place his pieces actively; for example, the knights on c5 and e5, the queen's rook on c1, and so on.

Another plan for White consists in creating an attack on the kingside using support points in the center and the open e-file. However, this is a difficult route because Black doesn't have any weaknesses on the kingside and creating them is not easy. Yet, in practice, White has successfully implemented both of these plans.

Meanwhile, Black should aspire to simplify the position into an ending where the weakness of White's isolated pawn can be exploited. Therefore, exchanges favor Black. In this way, he can also weaken or prevent a possible attack by White.

On the other hand, Black can try to seize the initiative by laying siege to the isolated d4-pawn in order to bind White's pieces to its defense.

The game **Tarrasch–Capablanca** (San Sebastián 1911) continued:

13. a4 ...

A similar plan was employed in the game **Chigorin–Schlechter**, Vienna

1898, with the idea of transferring the queen to a3.

Premature is 13. ♖e5, as Black could simplify the position by 13... ♙b6. After 14. ♕xd5 ♖xd5 15. ♙xb6 axb6, White achieves nothing.

On 13. ♖e4, good for Black is 13... ♖b6, and if 14. ♕f1, then 14... ♕e6. Stronger for White is 14. ♖c5, but then 14... ♖xc4 15. ♙xc4 b6 16. ♖d3 ♕b7 ensures equality for Black.

13... ♙b6

As mentioned, simplifications are good for Black. Besides, he also clears d8 for the rook.

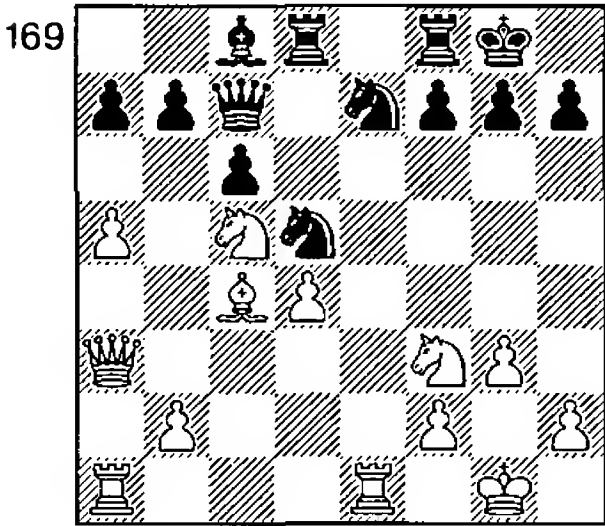
14. ♙a3 ♕e6
15. a5 ♙c7
16. ♖e4 ...

Tarrasch noted at the time that 16. ♖g5 yields nothing special, as the bishop goes to f5 and then the knight cannot hold out on g5.

16... ♖ad8
17. ♖c5 ♕c8

Black has finished deploying his forces and begins to eye the isolated pawn.

18. g3 ...



White prevents the knight from coming to f4, but he creates more weaknesses on the kingside.

This position has been subjected to exhaustive investigation, with the conclusion that White should post the knight on e5, with an equal game. However, years of analytical research and minutes at the board are not same thing.

I'd like to suggest the plan of weakening Black's queenside pawns with 18.a6 b6 19. ♖d3 followed by ♖ac1, and pressuring the c6-pawn.

18... ♕f5
19. ♖ad1 ...

White bolsters his center pawn. However, 19.a6 is still worth considering.

19... ♖d6
20. ♕xd5 ...

This move was made in the naive hope that Black would recapture automatically, thereby creating his own isolated pawn that would block a frontal attack of White's d-pawn. Had the bishop retreated Black would have seized the initiative with 20... ♕g4, giving White one more reason to regret weakening his kingside by g2-g3.

20... ♕b5!

It is natural for Black to use such a weapon as an in-between move.

21. ♙b4 ...

Taking on f7 with the bishop is bad, as the capture by the queen would put two attackers on the f3-knight.

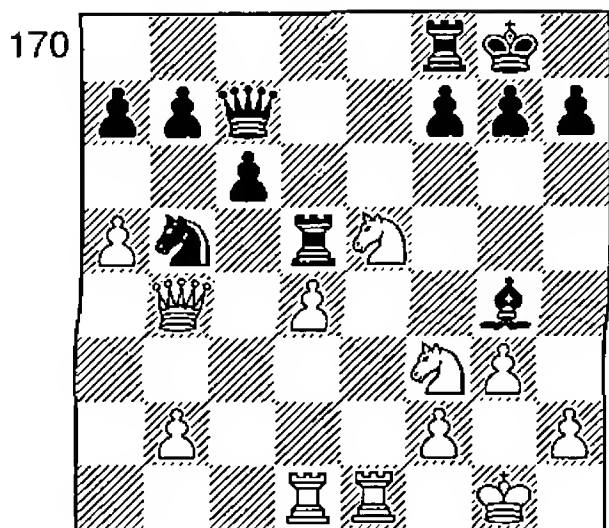
21... ♖xd5
22. ♖d3 ...

White aims to free himself of the weak d-pawn by means of the maneuver ♖d3-f4 and d4-d5.

22... ♕g4
23. ♖de5 ...

Black's last move brings a change to White's plan. The knight goes to e5 to support its colleague on f3, which is very

important for the defense of the center pawn.



23... h5?

Black loses his way.

Q. Take a moment to decide what Black should do instead.

Black should play for simplification by 23... Rxe5 24. Nxe5 Qxd1 25. Rxd1 Qd8 , when he is clearly better.

24. Nxe5 hxg4

25. Nxe5 ...

25. Qe5 is refuted by 25... Qxd4 .

25... Qfd8

26. Re7 Qd6

Another inaccuracy. Eyewitnesses later wrote that Capablanca played too hastily in his opponent's time trouble. It is important to learn that by playing fast yourself in such situations, you depreciate your time advantage and equalize the chances for both sides.

It is also important to note that, when reviewing the games of others, there will be times when the reason for this or that move will be unclear. However, we should not blame ourselves. It is possible that the player just moved hastily or perhaps was simply pursuing a

mirage. Therefore, we should not condemn too harshly the errors and inaccuracies to be found scattered in the games of outstanding players or, for that matter, those found in our own games.

Better for Black was 26... Qc8 , when after 27. Qc4 Qd7 , he would at last win White's center pawn.

27. Qxd6 Qxd6

28. a6 bxa6

29. Rxa7 Qb5

30. Rxa6 Qxd4

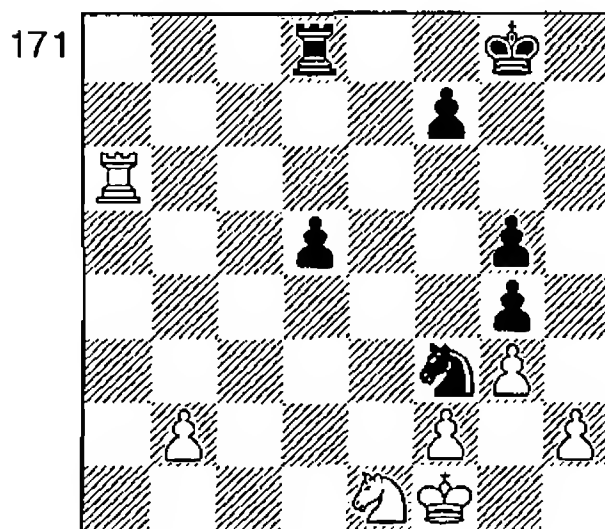
31. Qf1 g5

32. Qg2 Qf3

33. Rxd5 cxd5

33... Qxh2+ 34. Qe2 cxd5 35. Qe3 d4 36. Qf5 d3 37. Qd1 is also unpromising.

34. Qe1 ...



34... Qe8

34... Qc8 offered better winning chances, for example, 35. Qxf3 gxf3 36. Qe1 Qc2 . Another interesting continuation is 34... Qb8 35. Qd3 Qxh2+ 36. Qe2 Qe8+ 37. Qd2 Qf3+ , which promised Black more than he achieved in the game. 34... Qxh2+ achieves nothing because of 35. Qg1 .

35. Qxf3 gxf3

36. Qd6 Qc8

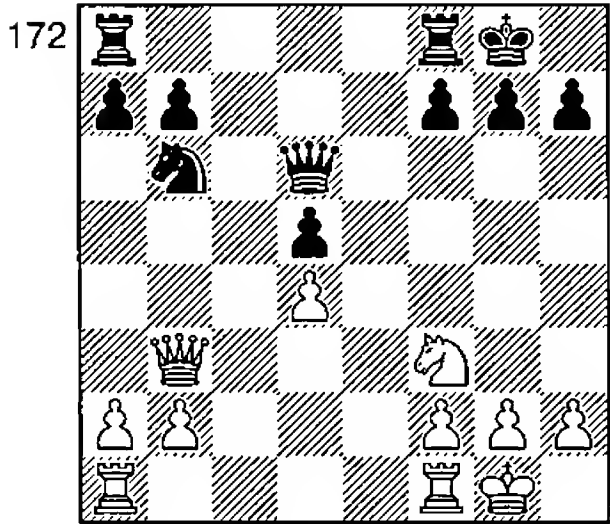
37. ♔e1 ♖e8+
38. ♕f1 ½-½

Here the opponents agreed to a draw.

In summary, White was a little ahead of Black in development in the opening and could play more freely. It looked as though White's pieces occupied good positions, although his center pawn was isolated. However, the game developed in such a way that White got nothing from his freer position and Black managed to organize strong pressure on the weak, isolated pawn. In the end, White escaped defeat only because of the inaccuracies made by the young Capablanca.

Speaking of inaccuracies and their consequences, tennis champion Björn Borg once made an interesting observation. He stated that someone could make twenty errors in tennis, but eventually win a match, whereas one seemingly insignificant error in chess can have irreparable consequences. In this respect, he felt chess was more akin to auto racing: a single second of carelessness can cause an accident!

No. 54: How to Play
in "Simple" Positions



Q. Evaluate this and suggest a plan for White.

This kind of position, with a blocked pawn center flanked by adjacent open files, can arise from many different openings. In such situations, piece maneuvers in order to capture the central squares and files, followed by actions on the flanks, take on special significance.

The game **Alekhine–Eliskases** (Buenos Aires Olympiad 1939) is an excellent example of play in such positions. It shows the richness of possibilities inherent in even the simplest circumstances.

At first glance, it appears that the diagram position is absolutely equal; however, White does have some advantage due to his more active queen and knight. Nevertheless, Black should be able to draw with accurate defense.

15. ♖fe1 ...
Rooks belong on open files.
15... ♖ac8
16. ♖ac1 h6?

On 16...f6, Alekhine intended the plan of g2-g3 and ♖f3-h4, with initiative.

17. ♖e5 ♖c7
18. g3! ...

In major-piece endings, it is often necessary to arrange the pawns so that the king is safely defended. Here, the king will be safe behind the pawn triangle.

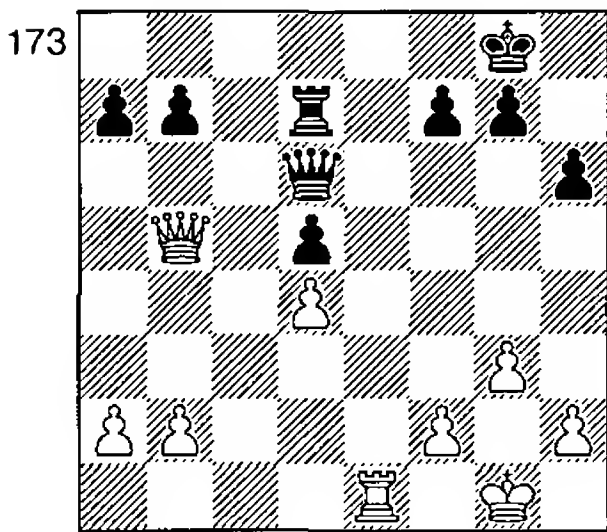
18... ♖fc8
19. ♖xc7 ♖xc7
20. ♖b5 ♖d7

Though White has squeezed everything he could out of the position, Alekhine would have enjoyed few winning chances had Black played 20...♖e7

21. ♖a5 f6 22. ♗g6 ♖xe1+ 23. ♗xe1 ♜f7 24. ♗f4 g5. However, even in such “dead-drawn” positions, the active side can put pressure on the opponent. Just consider how many similar positions Bobby Fischer won!

Black believed that the knight trade would bring some relief, but it comes at the cost of losing control of the e-file and further endangering his king.

21. ♗xd7 ♖xd7



White is better because of his possession of the e-file and safer king. Move by move, White can improve his position with threats, while Black is unable to do the same. White's subsequent play is a model for playing in similar positions.

22. ♖e8+ ♜h7

23. h4! ...

By advancing this pawn, White prepares to squeeze his opponent further. After the move h4-h5, White will have the chance to dent the black king's pawn cover. But first it is necessary to attack it along the b1-h7 diagonal in order to force the g-pawn to advance.

23... a6

Black cannot stop White's h-pawn from advancing. If 23...h5?!, then 24. ♖a8 a6 25. ♗e2 threatens both to cap-

ture the pawn and to invade the eighth rank.

24. ♗e2 ♖d8

25. ♖e7 ♖d7

26. ♖e5 g6

27. h5 ♗f6

28. ♗e3 ♖d6

29. ♗b3 ...

Now White will gain a passed pawn in the center, while Black's kingside pawn structure is seriously weakened. Black's piece activity cannot make up for this disadvantage.

29... ♖b6

30. hxg6+ ♗xg6

It is inadvisable to take with the pawn because of 31. ♗xd5 ♖xb2 32. ♗d7+.

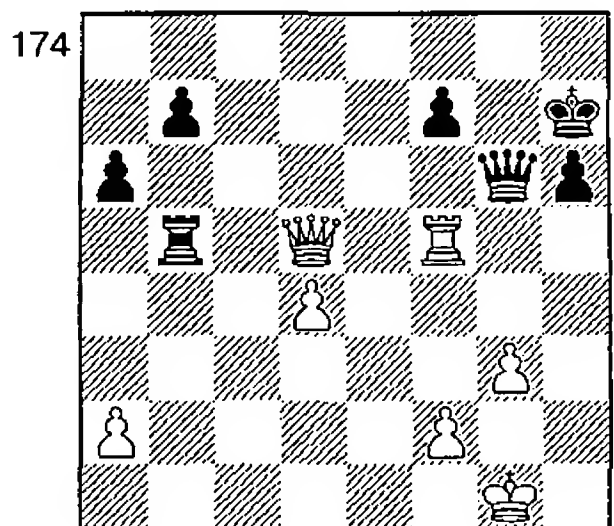
31. ♗xd5 ♖xb2

32. ♖f5! ...

White restricts the movements of the black queen. The harmonious position of White's pieces, the poor position of the black king, and the passed d4-pawn are enough to win.

32... ♖b5?

Black could prolong the struggle by 32...♗g8!, although after 33. ♖f4 the passed pawn in the center should ultimately decide.



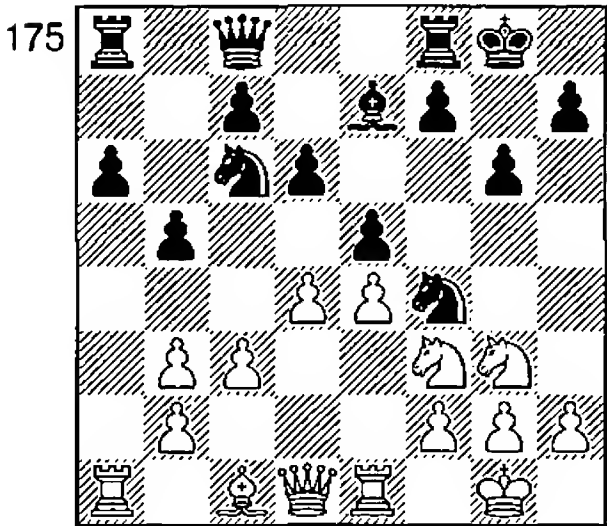
33. ♖xf7+! ...

Capturing with the queen led only to a draw. Now we arrive at a simple rook ending.

33...♔g8 34. ♖f6+ ♖xd5 35. ♖xg6+ ♔h7 36. ♖b6 ♖xd4 37. ♖xb7+ ♔g8 38. ♖b6 ♖a4 39. ♖xb6 ♖xa2 40. ♔g2 a5 41. ♖a6 a4 42. ♖a7 a3 43. g4 ♔f8 44. g5 ♔g8 45. ♔g3 ♖a1 46. ♔g4 ♖g1 47. ♔f5 ♖g2 48. f4 a2 49. ♔f6 1-0

Alekhine masterfully used his slight advantage in development and better piece placement. By combining threats to b7 and d5 with play on the c- and e-files, he consistently increased his advantage until victory was attained.

No. 55:
Pawns as Anchors for the Pieces



Q. Suggest a plan for White.

As the reader knows, advanced pawns often control squares that can become an important base for penetration by the pieces into the opponent's camp. Practice has shown that it is often best to occupy such outpost squares with a knight. Thus, if the white pawns are on d4 and e4, and the knight is on f3, then by playing d4-d5 and ♖f3-d4, White creates the precon-

ditions for invasion by this piece because c6, e6, and f5 would be controlled by his pawns. That said, let's now return to the diagram position from Maróczy–Yates (New York 1924), where events developed along these lines.

15. d5! ♖d8
16. ♖xf4 exf4
17. ♖e2 g5

To defend the pawn, Black must weaken his pawn structure and surrender control of f5.

18. ♖fd4 ♖e8
19. ♖f5 ♖f8
20. ♖ed4 f6
21. g3! ...

With this move White opens the h-file, which is an important conduit for the attack.

21... fxg3
22. hxg3 c5

Black would like to put the knight on f7, but this is impossible so long as the white knight is on d4 and controls e6. Therefore, the text move is necessary, but it creates another weakness — the d6-pawn. However, Black's choice was limited to the lesser of evils.

23. ♖f3 ...

White intends to move the knight to g4 via f3 and h2.

23... ♖f7
24. ♖h2! ♖a7
25. ♖h5 ♖g7
26. ♖g4 ♖d7
27. ♖g2 ...

The threat of 28. ♖h1 forces the win of the pawn.

27... ♖e5
28. ♖xd6! ♖d8
29. ♖xe5 fxe5
30. ♖f5 ♖f6

31. ♖h1 ♖f8
32. ♗g4 ...

White retreats to make way for the rook. This is a typical method in such positions.

32... ♔h8
33. ♖h6 a5
34. ♘e3! ♕e8

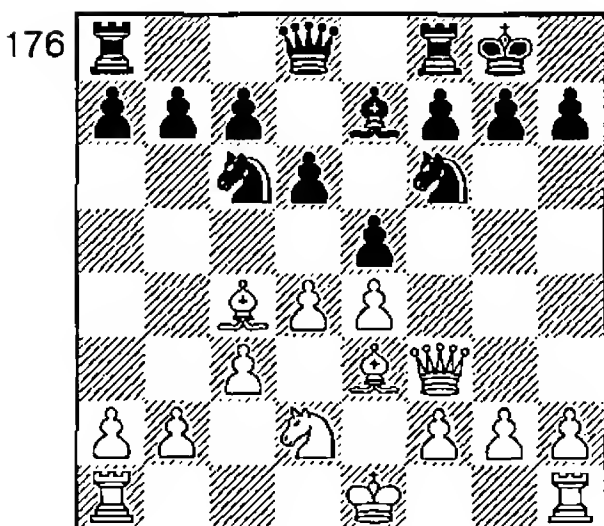
White invites the queen trade, as it wins material: 34... ♕xg4 35. ♘xg4 ♖g7 36. ♖e6 ♖af7 37. ♖f1. Black declines the offer, but his queen is made worse as a result.

35. ♖ah1 ♖ff7
36. ♗f5 ♗f8
37. ♘g4 ♖d8

In the tradition of the time, White announced checkmate in three moves.

38. ♖xh7+ ♔g8
39. ♗g6+ ♖g7
40. ♖h8#

No. 56: Countering a Wing Attack



Q. Does the advance 9. g4 a) correspond to the position and promise an advantage; or b) ruin White's position?

9. g4 ...

In the game **Borisenko—Nezhmetdinov** (USSR Championship 1954), Black shows White's attack to be premature by an immediate counterstrike in the center. The rule of thumb is that a flank attack can only succeed if the center is blocked or if the attacking side controls the center. In this situation, this is not the case.

9... exd4
10. cxd4 d5!
11. ♖d3 ...

This move is similarly cavalier! Necessary was 11. exd5, with a slightly worse position after 11... ♘a5 12. ♖d3 ♗xd5 13. ♗xd5 ♘xd5 14. ♔e2. The pawn sacrifice is unsound and based only on a trap on move 17.

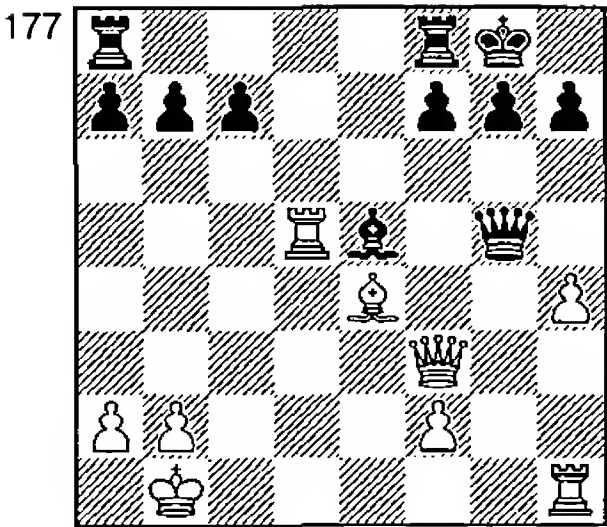
11... dxe4
12. ♘xe4 ♘xd4
13. ♖xd4 ♗xd4
14. 0-0-0 ♘xe4
15. ♖xe4 ♗c5+
16. ♔b1 ♖f6

Black is developing the contours of the forthcoming counterattack, which can be especially dangerous with bishops of opposite color.

17. g5 ...

This trap rests on the replies 17... ♖e5? or 17... ♖xg5?. If 17... ♖e5, then 18. ♖d5 ♗e7 19. ♗f5 with an extra piece. In the case of 17... ♖xg5, the continuation 18. ♖d5 ♗e7 19. ♖e1 allows White to create some threats, but these are not really very serious. However, Black can play differently.

17... ♗xg5
18. ♖d5 ♖e5
19. h4 ...



19... ♖f4

Black avoids yet another trap. If 19... ♖f6, then 20. ♖h5 and White wins material.

20. ♖xf4 ...

The benefit of having extra material is the ability to return it under favorable conditions. White could have won a pawn back by 20. ♖xh7+ ♖xh7 21. ♖h5+ ♖g8 22. ♖xe5, but after 22... ♖ae8, the endgame would not have been pleasant for him.

20... ♖xf4

21. ♖f5 ♖d6

22. ♖xb7 ♖ab8

Despite the opposite-colored bishops, White's position is hopeless. The pawns on h4 and f2 are extremely vulnerable.

23. ♖c6 ♖b6

24. ♖a4 ♖b4

25. ♖c6 g6

26. ♖f3 ...

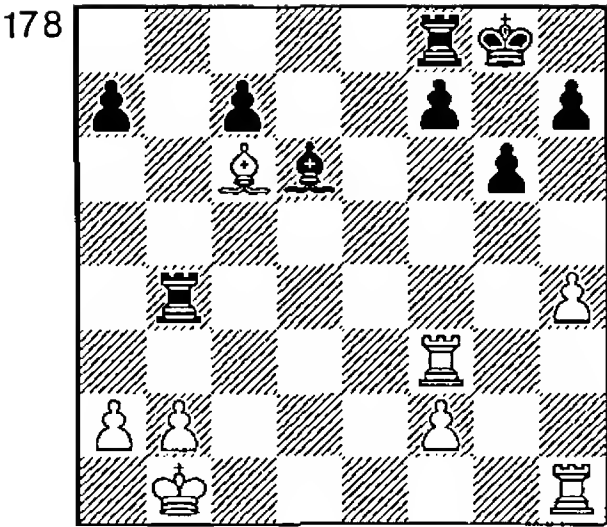
(See Diagram 178)

26... h5

Black fixes the weak h4-pawn in place.

27. b3? ...

White brings grist to the opponent's mill. After this loosening, Black has a strong attack against the king.



27... ♖e7

28. ♖f3 ♖d8

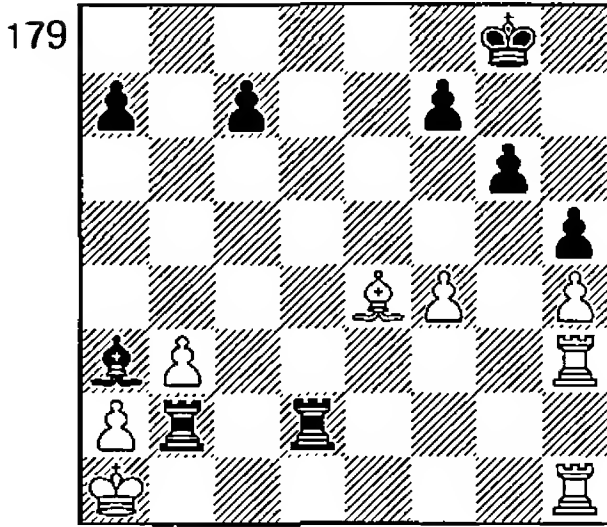
29. ♖c2 ♖bd4

30. f4 ♖d2+

31. ♖b1 ♖a3

32. ♖e4 ♖b2+

33. ♖a1 ♖dd2



This visually striking position demonstrates the power of the major pieces on the opponent's second rank.

34. ♖b1 ♖c5

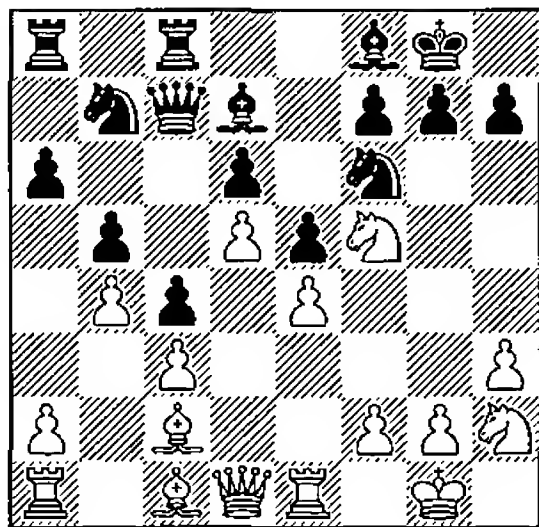
35. ♖d1 ♖d4

0-1

White resigned, as checkmate is inevitable.

No. 57: A Pointless Break

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Q. In the diagram position, does 19... a5: a) promise Black counterplay; or b) only help White?

19 ... a5?

In the game **Geller–Mecking** (Palma de Mallorca Interzonal 1970), White has the better position and, using the advanced post on square f5, he threatens various attacks on the kingside such as g2-g4 or ♖e1-e3-g3. Meanwhile, Black's forces are hemmed in on the queenside, in particular the passive knight on b7. Therefore, Black should focus on defending the kingside and avoid opening the game.

20. ♖e3 ...

A multi-purpose move. First, it controls c3 in preparation for the pawn trade. Second, the rook is ready to go to g3 to force Black to exchange on f5, when White's light-squared bishop will increase its potential activity. White will get a fine springboard on e4, and the new f5-pawn will be available to assist in storming the king's fortress.

20... axb4

21. cxb4 ♙xf5

This move is premature, but Black did not want to simply sit on his hands,

so he tries to play actively. Doubling rooks on the a-file promises Black nothing, as White would simply play a2-a3.

22. exf5 c3

Black wants to use c4 to attack the d5- and b4-pawns. For example, in reply to 23. g4 there follows ... ♖c7-c4.

23. ♘g4! ...

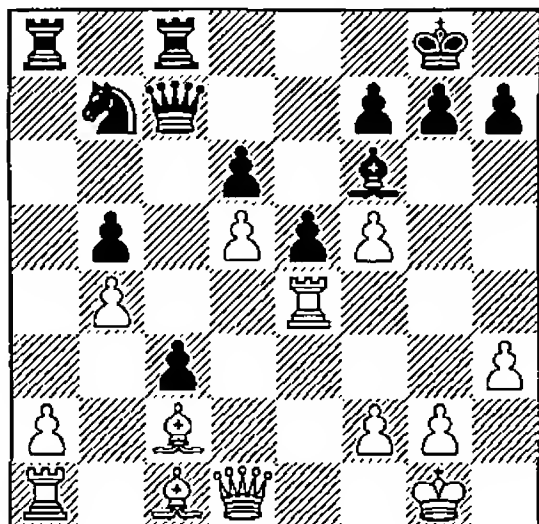
White immediately takes measures to contest the control of e4. It is necessary to place the rook there to deprive Black's pieces of the slightest bit of activity.

23... ♙e7

24. ♘xf6+ ♙xf6

25. ♖e4 ...

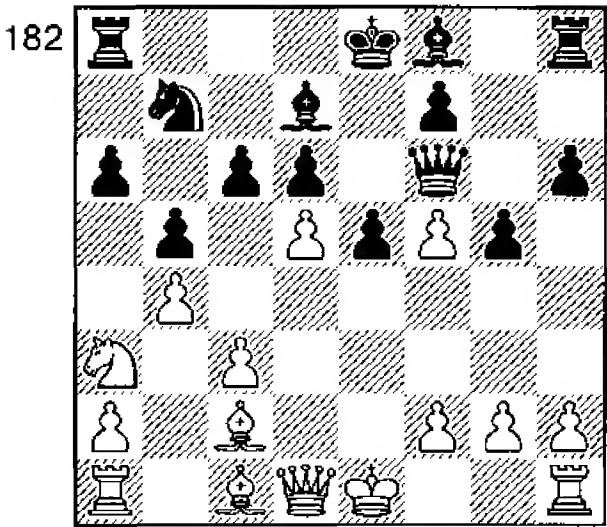
181



The basic goal of White's strategic plan has been achieved. He will now begin a pawn storm, but he will not refrain from exchanges because if we were to remove all the pieces from the board, except the c2-bishop and b7-knight, Black could resign at once.

25... ♖d7 26. ♖f3 ♖c7 27. h4 ♖e7 28. g3 ♘d8 29. a3 ♖cc8 30. ♖b1 ♖c7 31. ♖e2 ♖b8 32. ♖b3 ♖d7 33. ♖f3 ♙e7 34. ♖e3 ♙f6 35. ♖e4 ♙e7 36. g4 f6 37. ♖e3 ♘f7 38. ♖bxc3 ♖bc8 39. ♙e4 ♙d8 40. ♙d2 ♖c4 41. ♖xc4 ♖xc4 42. ♖c3 ♙b6 43. ♖xc4 bxc4 44. g5 fxg5 45. bxcg5 ♙d8 46. ♖h5 c3 47. ♙e3 h6 48. f6 1-0

No. 58: Useful Retreat



Q. How can White increase the pressure on the queenside?

15. **b1!** ...

A bewildering retreat from the game **Keres–Tarve** (Estonian Corr. Championship 1951). Only recently was the knight brought forward and now it returns to its starting square. To quote from Friedrich Schiller: “The Moor has done his duty, the Moor can go.” White’s retreat may look like a waste of time, but the position is closed and Black cannot use this time to create any threats.

In truth, the knight is no longer needed on a3, as it has fulfilled its task of provoking a serious weakness on the queenside by Black’s ...b7-b5. Now the knight will find new employment in the center – on e4 and perhaps even on d5. In addition, the knight also clears the a-file so White can increase the pressure on the queenside by a2-a4.

15... **d8**

Black intends to defend c6. The main drawback of his position is that the pawn advances have left both flanks weak and his pieces are poorly placed. If 15...a5, to answer 16. a4 by 16...axb4,

White would not play 17. cxb4 c5, but 17. dxc6! **xc6** 18. axb5 **xa1** 19. bxc6 and upon 19...**a5**, there follows 20. c7 **d7** 21. cxb4, etc.

16. **a4** **bx a4**

Black reluctantly plays this move, but there was nothing better, as White would have taken on b5 himself. 16... cxd5 would have been sheer madness: 17. axb5 **xb5** 18. **xd5** **c6** 19. **a4!**

17. **c4!** ...

One consequence of Black’s last move is that d5 is now firmly in White’s hands. Losing the f5-pawn doesn’t matter.

17... **xf5**

18. **dx c6** **xc6**

19. **c3!** ...

This is the position that Keres had envisioned. By sacrificing the pawn, White gets a firm grip on the center, where the black king is still in residence.

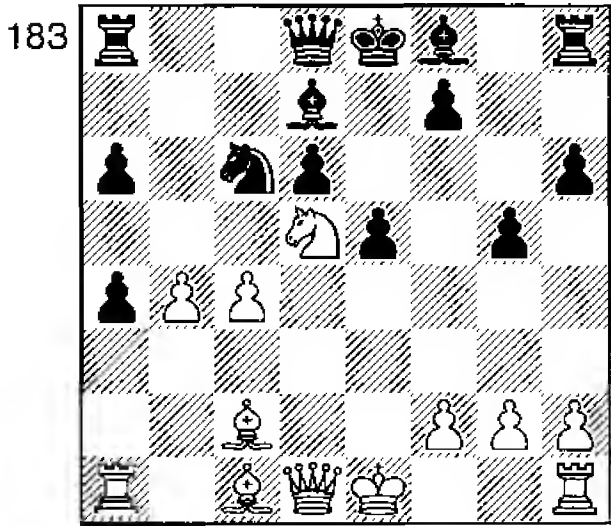
19... **d7**

Trades often benefit the defender, but one here would weaken the light squares even further.

20. **d5!** ...

The knight lands on d5 after all.

20... **d8**



21. **h4!** ...

Having settled accounts on the queenside, White opens a second front on the kingside.

21... **gxh4**

Or 21...g4 22. ♖e3 ♜b8 23. ♙xa4 with the idea of 24. ♙xc6.

22. ♙e3 **♜b8**

23. ♙xa4 **♙g7**

Black vacates a square for the king, but now White wins back his material while remaining on the offensive.

24. ♙xc6 **♙xc6**

25. ♜xa6 **♙xd5**

This amounts to capitulation, but 26...♙b7 fails to 26. ♖g4!.

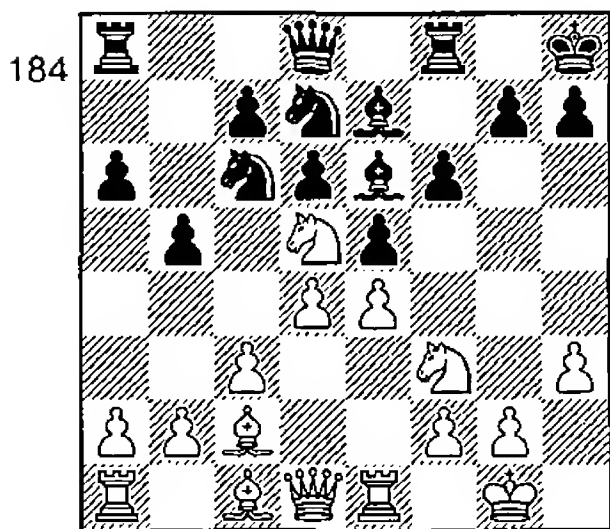
26. ♖xd5 **♜xb4**

Otherwise, the d6-pawn will be lost and White's passed pawns will advance.

27. ♖c6+ **1-0**

Here Black resigned in view of 27... ♖d7 28. ♜a8+ ♔c7 29. ♜a7+ ♖xa7 30. ♙xa7 ♜b1+ 31. ♙e2 ♜xh1 32. c5 ♜d8 33. ♙b6 ♜d7 34. ♖c8.

No. 59: Spanish Riches



Q. On which flank should White play?

This position, as with many of the examples in this book, arose from the

Ruy López or Spanish Game. Though it is one of the oldest openings, it is still in use today. If you want to learn how to play chess, then learn the Spanish! Capablanca considered it to be essential to developing an understanding of position play.

Those who think that it is possible to simply memorize variations, and then apply them successfully in tournament games, are mistaken. Some of the greatest grandmasters in history have made a deep study of this opening and many new ideas continue to be discovered.

One of the reasons that the Ruy is so complex is that numerous kinds of pawn structures can arise, embodying many different motifs: the fight for open files, for making the light-squared bishop active, for gaining a forward base for the knight in the center or on f5, or for a pawn advantage on the flank, to list just a few. Such is the richness of ideas in the Spanish Game.

14. a4! **...**

In the game **Alekhine–Barcza** (Münich 1942), White chose to play on the queenside. This decision is connected with the possibility of taking the a-file, as 14...♜b8 is bad because of 15. axb5 axb5 16. ♜a6 ♙b6 17. ♙xb6 ♜xb6 18. ♜xb6 cxb6 19. d5 and White wins.

14... **♙a7**

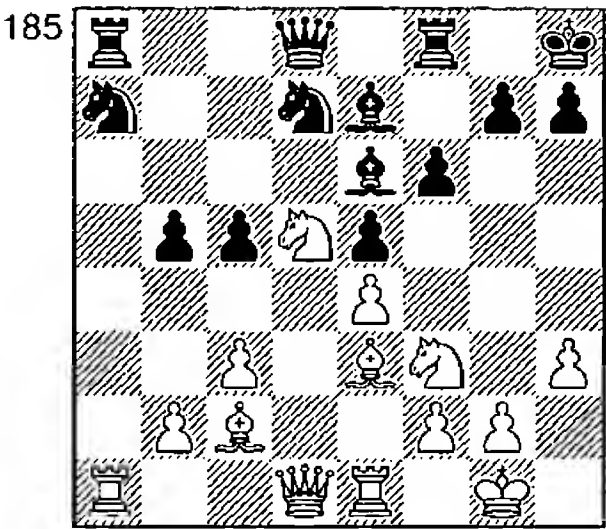
15. axb5 **axb5**

16. ♙e3! **...**

White creates new threats with every move. For example, he now threatens to win a piece by 17. ♙xc7 ♖xe7 18. d5.

16... **c5**

17. dxc5 **dxcc5**



18. ♖a6! ...

White attacks the bishop on e6 and vacates a1 for the queen. Thus, Black's answer is forced.

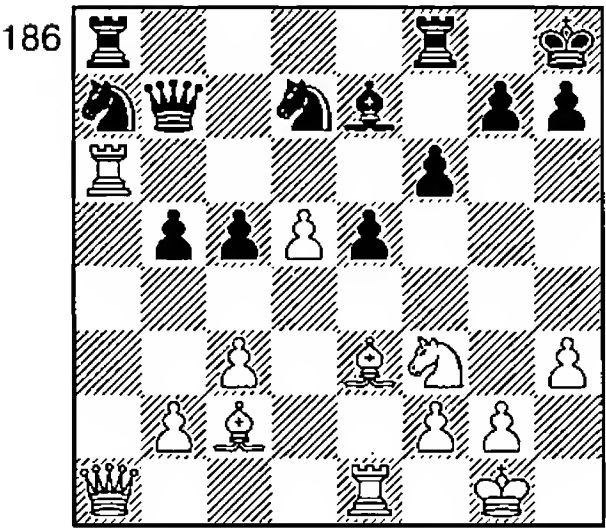
18... ♗xd5

19. exd5! ...

Just so. This is much stronger than 19. ♖xd5, when Black could offer stiff resistance by 19... ♖c7. As a result of White's properly chosen strategic plan, the strength of his pieces increases with each move. Now the light-squared bishop has an open diagonal and Black must deal with the deadly threat of 20. d6. Thus, we can see how White's possession of the a-file has hastened victory.

19... ♔c8

20. ♕a1 ♕b7



21. b4! ...

This move is very strong. Black cannot take the b4-pawn, as it opens yet another line to a7. Hence the creation of connected passed pawns is inevitable. The immediate d5-d6 would be ineffective because of 21... ♗d8 with a subsequent ... ♗b6.

21... ♖fb8

If 21... ♖fc8, then 22. d6 ♗d8 23. bxc5 ♗xc5 24. ♗xc5 ♖xc5 25. ♗e4.

22. d6 ♗d8

Sadly, Black's plan to free his position by 22... ♗c6 23. ♖xa8 ♖xa8 24. dxe7! cannot be carried out, as his rook has to guard the eighth rank.

23. bxc5 ♖c8

24. ♖a2 e4

25. ♗xe4! ...

This strong move ends matters.

25... ♕xe4

26. ♗d4 ♕g6

Unfortunately for Black, the weakness of the back rank prevents him from keeping the extra piece.

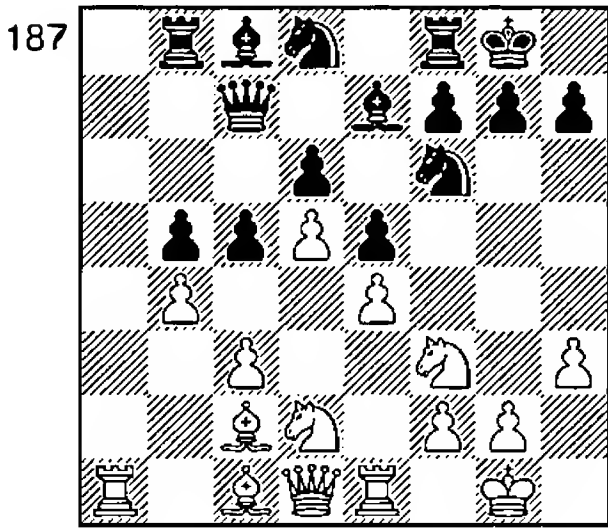
27. ♖xa7 ♖xa7

28. ♖xa7 ♗e5

29. ♗xe5 1-0

Here Black finally resigned.

No. 60: Blocking to Build Up



Q. Should Black play a) 16...♖b7; or b) 16... c4?

16... ♖b7

In the game **Karpov—Unzicker** (Nice Olympiad 1974), playing the knight to b7 decreases Black's defensive possibilities, because the knight is deprived of all mobility. Besides, Black has to reckon with the invasion of a rook on a7.

16...c4 was necessary. In **Karpov—Spassky** (USSR Championship 1973), after 17. ♖f1 ♖e8 18. ♖3h2 f6 19. f4 ♖f7, Black's position was sturdy enough.

17. ♖f1 ♖d7

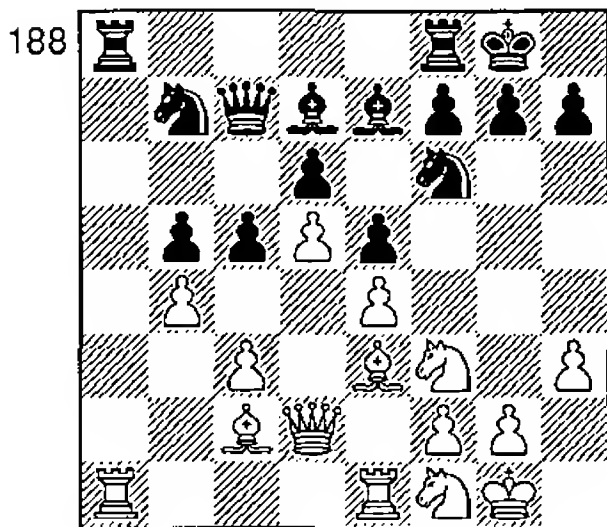
18. ♖e3 ...

The bishop is better off here than on d2, as after the inevitable ...c5-c4 it will survey the queenside, too.

18... ♖a8

It is inadvisable to concede control over an open file without a struggle.

19. ♖d2 ...



19... ♖fc8

Because of the knight on b7, it is difficult for Black to contest the a-file, as he does not have the maneuver ...♖c7-b7. For the sake of comparison, see the classic game **Thomas—Rubinstein** (Baden-

Baden 1925). Therefore, Karpov gave the variation 19...♖fb8! 20. ♖d3 ♖c8 “to establish the ‘continuity’ of the major pieces on the a-file.”

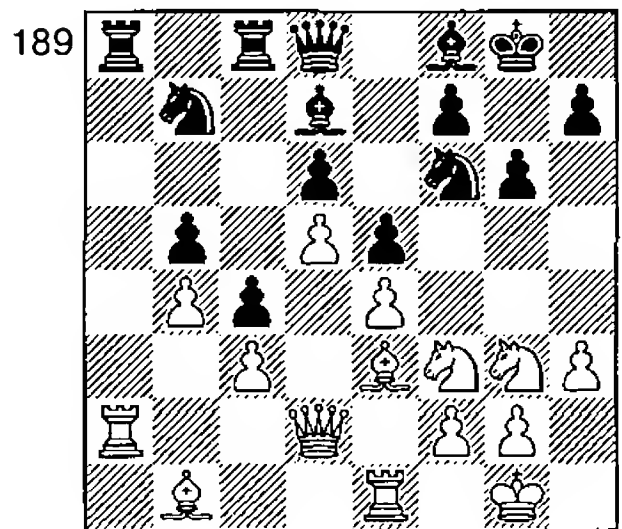
20. ♖d3 g6

21. ♖g3 ♖f8

22. ♖a2 c4

23. ♖b1 ♖d8

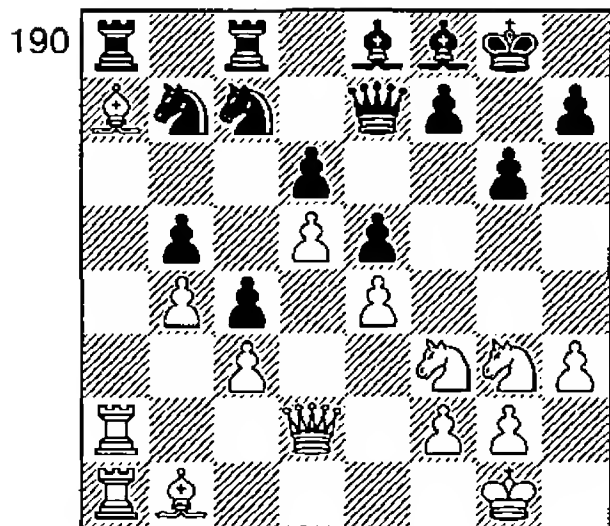
White would also win the fight for the a-file after 23...♖d8 24. ♖e2 ♖xa2 (24...♖b7 25. ♖a5) 25. ♖xa2 ♖b7 26. ♖a1 ♖a8 27. ♖a2 ♖xa2 28. ♖xa2.



24. ♖a7! ...

The following statement by Kasparov from *Garry Kasparov on My Great Predecessors*, Part V, is extremely instructive: “This original maneuver became a well-known technique in the fight for the open file after the 10th game of the Spassky-Karpov match.... There Karpov managed to defend himself, and now he himself tests its effectiveness. White temporarily blocks the a-file, concentrating his major pieces on it under cover of the bishop, and at a convenient moment, after retreating the bishop, he invades the opponent's position. Largely because of the bad position of his knight at b7, it is hard for Black to counter this obvious intention.”

24... ♘e8
 25. ♖c2 ♘c7
 26. ♖ea1 ♙e7
 27. ♖b1 ♙e8



Black prepared himself as much as he could to meet the queenside threats. But now White uses his space advantage and his pieces' mobility to start action on the opposite flank.

28. ♘e2 ♘d8
 29. ♘h2 ♙g7
 30. f4 f6
 31. f5 g5

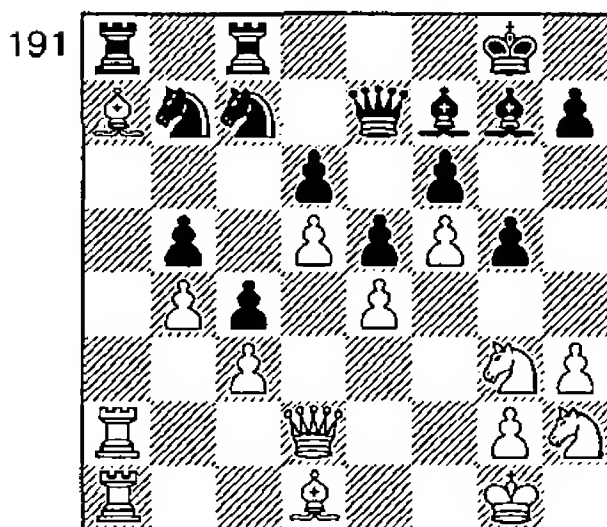
One consequence of this move is the weakening of g6, but 31...gxf5 is also bad because of 32. exf5 ♙f7 33. ♙e4.

As we have seen, the Spanish Game often leads to a long and difficult positional struggle. Thus, it is necessary to search for ways to increase the activity of the pieces in order to make them more effective. One problem that White faces in this opening is how to activate the light-squared bishop, because it is often obstructed by its own pawns located on light squares. We saw one way to do this in Kasparov–Giorgadze; now Karpov demonstrates a different one.

32. ♙c2! ...

This maneuver is designed to exchange light-squared bishops, after which the light squares in Black's position will be weakened.

32... ♙f7
 33. ♘g3 ♘b7
 34. ♙d1 ...



34... h6?

This is the wrong thing to do, unless forced. Weakening g6 hastens Black's demise.

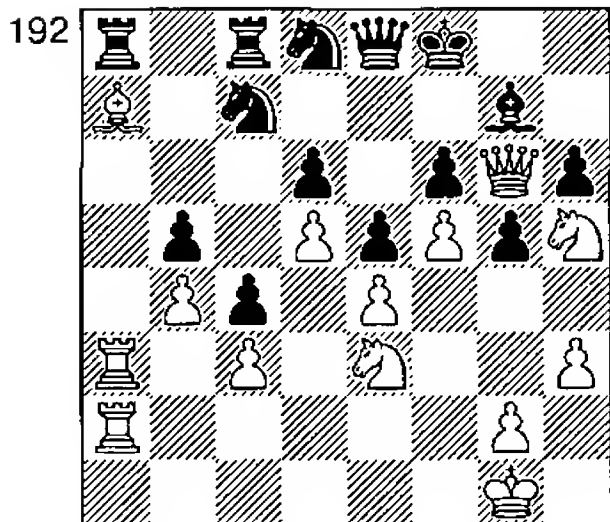
35. ♙h5 ♙e8
 36. ♙d1 ♘d8
 37. ♖a3 ♙f8
 38. ♖1a2 ♙g8

These waiting moves were due to impending time trouble.

39. ♘g4 ♙f8
 40. ♘e3 ♙g8
 41. ♙xf7+ ♘xf7
 42. ♙h5 ♘d8

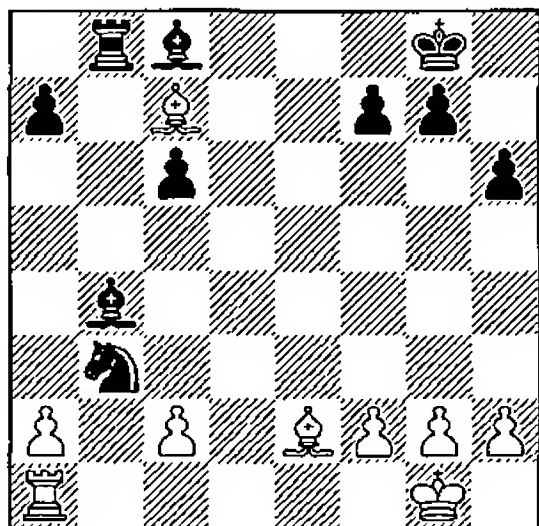
Black could bar the queen's entry by 42...♘h8. However, in this case Karpov had prepared the following variation: 42...♘h8 43. ♘g4 ♙xh5 44. ♘xh5 ♙f7 45. ♙b6 ♖xa3 46. ♖xa3 ♖a8 47. ♖xa8 ♘xa8 48. ♙d8 – *Zugzwang!*

43. ♙g6! ♙f8
 44. ♘h5 1-0



Black resigned.

No. 61: Chess Is Not Checkers!



Q. Black has just played 21... ♖a5xb3. How should White respond?

22. ♖d1! ...

The German word for a move like this is “*Zwischenzug*,” or “in-between move.” An in-between move is usually used in place of an obvious continuation such as a recapture. As my chess coach, IM Alexander Cherepkov, used to say, “Chess is not checkers, it is not necessary to capture.”

Even experienced players often overlook such possibilities and it can be very hard to cope with their consequences.

Thus, in the game **Ragozin–Botvinnik** (USSR Championship 1945), White seizes the open d-file, making Black’s position all the more suspect. Tartakover once sagely compared an open file to an open wound!

It is an important strategic motif to win control of an open file at the very moment when the opponent cannot prevent it. Experienced players know the strength of a rook on an open file or rank; therefore, they always try to place this long-range piece on files free of pawns. Possession of an open file is often a decisive positional asset.

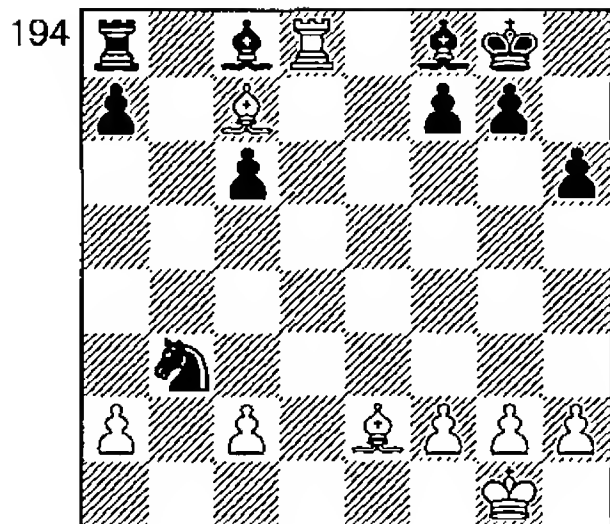
Of course, White will take the knight in due course.

22... ♖a8

After 22... ♖b7 23. ♖d8+ ♔h7 24. ♕d3+ f5 (24...g6 25. ♕e5! and White wins) 25. ♖xc8 ♜d4 26. ♕a6, the power of the bishop pair comes into play, which is why Black chose to stay on the eighth rank. The attempt to distract the rook by 22... ♜c1 fails to 23. ♖d8+! ♜h7 24. ♕d3+! ♜xd3 25. ♕xb8 with material gain for White.

23. ♖d8+ ♕f8

23... ♔h7 is no better, because of 24. ♕d3+ g6. Here White would not play 25. ♕e5, as Black defends successfully after 25... ♕b7 26. ♖d7 ♜c5 27. ♖xf7+ ♔g8 28. ♕c4 (or 28. ♕xg6 ♖d8 29. h4 ♖d1+ 30. ♔h2 ♜d7) 28... ♕a6. However, 25. cxb3! ♕b7 26. ♕b8 a5 27. a4 ♕d6 28. ♖xd6 ♖xb8 29. ♖d7 keeps the advantage for White. These lines show that no one wins a game based on general principles. It is always necessary to calculate variations during the game.



24. axb3? ...

Even chess titans like Viacheslav Ragozin, who later became a correspondence world champion, can commit inaccuracies. Let this serve as consolation for those who have done likewise. Now the rook breaks free from its imprisonment and White must win the game all over again. White is lucky that his advantage was not lost entirely and that his pieces remain more active than Black's.

White should have taken the knight by 24. cxb3! ♖b7 25. ♖b8 a5 26. a4, when there is a problem-like *Zugzwang* position on the board in which White practically has an extra piece. Incidentally, the natural move 24. ♖d6 is met by 24...♖b7 25. ♖xa8 ♖xa8 26. ♖xf8 ♘d4!, when it is Black who might win.

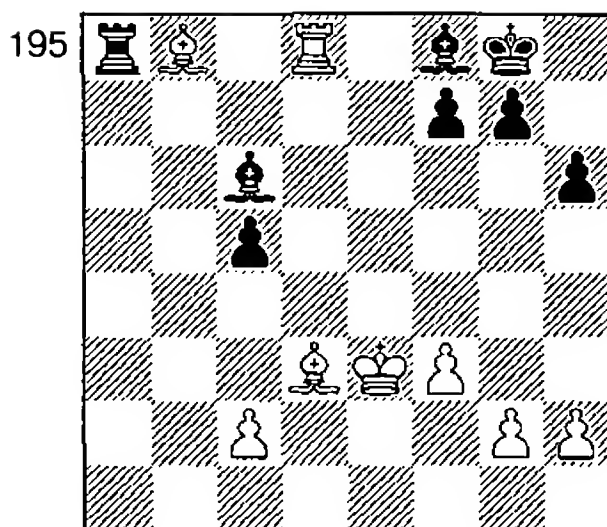
24... ♖b7
25. ♖b8 a5
26. f3 a4
27. bxa4 ♖xa4

The rook is finally freed.

28. ♖f2 c5
29. ♖e3 ♖c6

With his last two moves, Black has neutralized the threat of ♖e2-c4xf7+, but it's not possible to protect against all dangers.

30. ♖d3 ♖a8



31. ♖c4? ...

After this further error White can't win by normal means. White had to play 31. ♖e4! ♖a3+ 32. ♖f4 g5+ 33. ♖c5, when the strong centralized position of the white king makes it impossible for Black to escape. There could follow 33...♖xe4 34. ♖xe4 ♖a6 35. ♖d5 with a further exchange on d6. Once all the pieces are traded off, the destruction of the c-pawn brings about a victorious pawn ending.

32... ♖a3+
32. ♖d2 ...

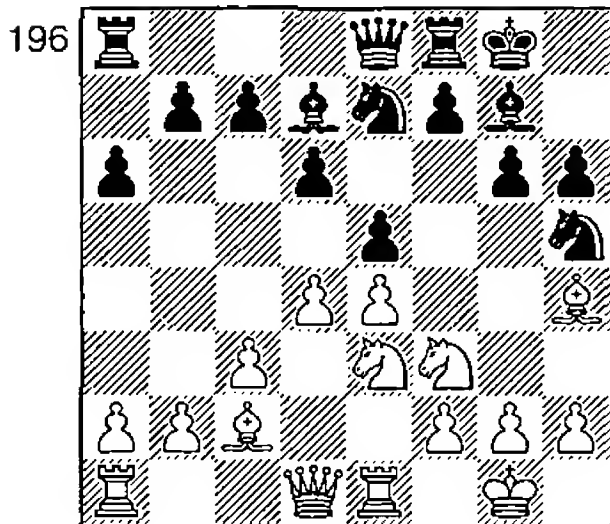
It is possible that White planned 32. ♖f4 but overlooked 32...♖a4!. Therefore it is necessary to move the king back, but this gives Black time to free his position. The draw is inevitable.

32...g5 33. ♖c8 ♖d7 34. ♖d8 ♖c6
35. ♖d3 ♖a8 36. ♖e3 ♖g7 37. ♖e5+
f6 38. ♖xa8 ♖xa8 39. ♖c7 ♖c6 40. h3
♖f7 ½-½

Here the game ended peacefully.

To sum up, I'd like to draw your attention to the tactical possibilities of in-between moves, and to the importance of staying eternally vigilant in every position!

No. 62: Limit Your Opponent's Mobility



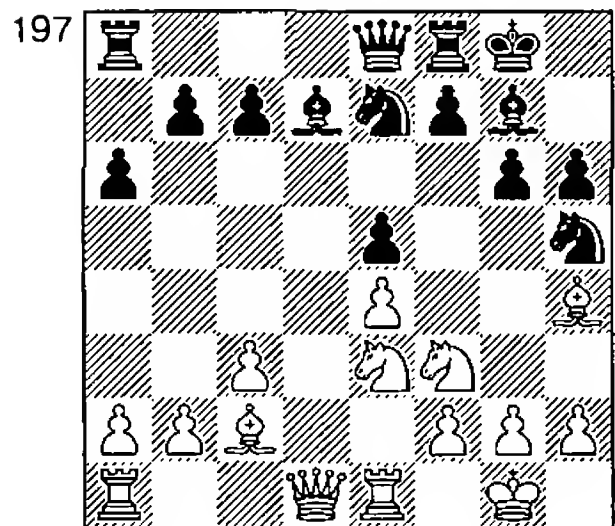
Q. Which move would you prefer: a) 15. dxe5; or b) 15. ♘d5?

15. dxe5! ...

This is the typical plan in similar situations. In **Botvinnik—Boleslavsky** (USSR Championship 1945), it guarantees White a small but unquestionable positional advantage. First, it is necessary to limit the opponent's dark-squared bishop. Second, it opens the d-file in preparation for Black's possible attack on the kingside, as it is known that wing attacks are less effective when the center is open. Plus, now White can create a battery of major pieces on the d-file.

In a later game, **Ribli—Kavalek** (Amsterdam 1973), White played 15. ♖d2 f6 16. h3 ♙e6 17. c4 ♜d8 18. b4 c6 19. ♜ad1. However, this position is not as good for White as in our example. Alas, even grandmasters are unfamiliar with the classics. In case of 15. ♘d5, Black would reply 15... ♙xd5 16. exd5 f5! with kingside counterplay.

15... dxe5



16. ♙g3! ...

This standard procedure is also useful. Black is compelled to exchange on g3 because of the need to defend the e5-pawn. The fact that White's h2-pawn will take up residence on g3 blunts Black's aspirations for a kingside attack. We saw a similar idea in the analysis to Smyslov—Euwe.

16... ♙xg3

17. hxg3 ♜d8

18. ♖e2 ♙c8

Boleslavsky decides not to give up the d5 square and plays ...c7-c6 on his next move. It is hard to recommend anything better. On 18... ♙e6, there follows 19. ♙b3 when a bishop trade benefits White.

19. ♜ad1 c6

20. ♜d2 ...

White's initiative on the d-file begins to materialize.

20... ♖e7

21. ♜ed1 ♙b6

Black was probably unaware of the danger hanging over him. Necessary was 21...b5; however, after 22. b4 followed by ♙c2-b3 and ♙f3-e1-d3-c5, White should still get an edge.

22. b4 ♙e6

Black prepares to exchange light-squared bishops, as otherwise the white bishop would be very active on b3, but this gives White an entry square on d7. In case of 22...f5 23. exf5 gxf5 24. ♖xd7 ♗xd7 25. ♘xf5 White develops a vigorous attack.

23. ♘b3 ...

Exchanges on d8 and e6 lead to a winning position for White due to Black's hopelessly weakened pawn structure.

23... ♖xd2

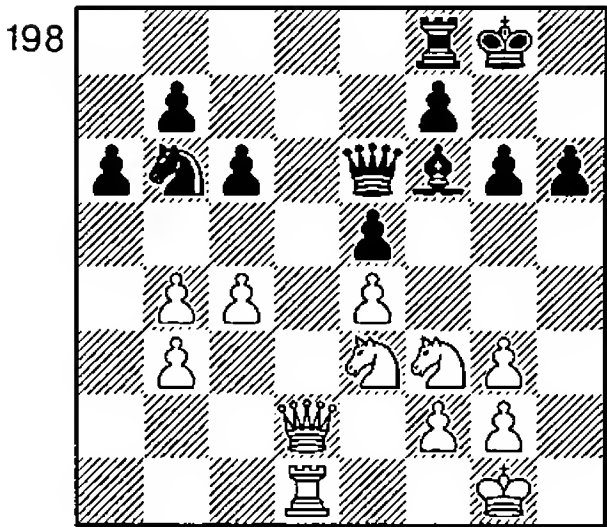
24. ♗xd2! ...

It is just this move that allows White to keep control of the open file. It is also very important that the b4-pawn is defended before the c-pawn advances. 24. ♖xd2 would have led to less of an edge after the natural 24...♗d8.

24... ♗xb3

25. axb3 ♗e6

26. c4 ♗f6



27. c5! ...

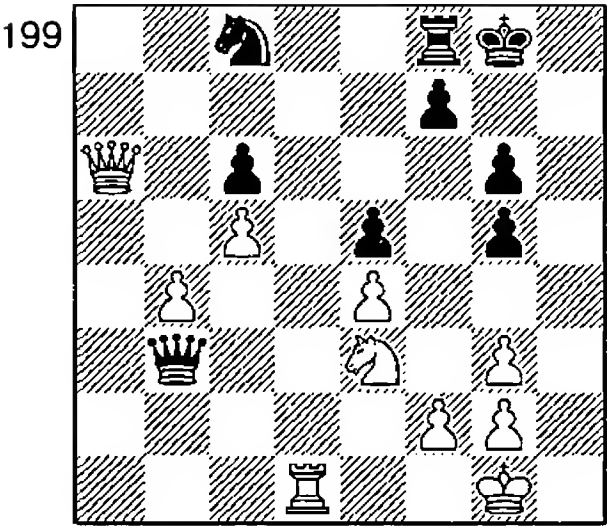
Now White would meet 27...♖d8 with 28. ♗xd8+ ♗xd8 29. ♖xd8+ and 30. cxb6. The coming invasion on the d-file gives White a decisive plus.

27... ♗c8

28. ♗d7 ♗xb3

29. ♗xb7 ♗g5

30. ♗xg5 bxc5
31. ♗xa6 ...



Now White has both a positional and a material advantage.

31... ♗e7

32. ♗b7 ♗e8

33. ♗d7 ♗f8

34. ♗d6 ♗xb4

35. ♗g4 ♗a8

36. ♗xe5 ...

An inaccuracy in time trouble, but nothing is spoiled. More precise was 36. ♗xe5 ♗xe4 37. ♗f6 ♗f5 38. ♗d7+, when either king move is bad.

36... ♗b3

37. ♗d7 ♗g8

38. ♗d6+ ♗g7

39. ♗d4+! ...

White avoids one last devilish trap. If 39. ♗e5, Black has the drawing shot 39...♗f6! 40. ♖d8 (not 40. ♖xf7+? ♗xf7! 41. ♗xf7 ♖a1+ 42. ♗h2 ♗g4+ 43. ♗h3 ♗xf2+ 44. ♗h2 ♖h1#) 40... ♖xd8 41. ♗xd8 ♗b1+ 42. ♗h2 ♗xe4 43. ♗c7 ♗d5.

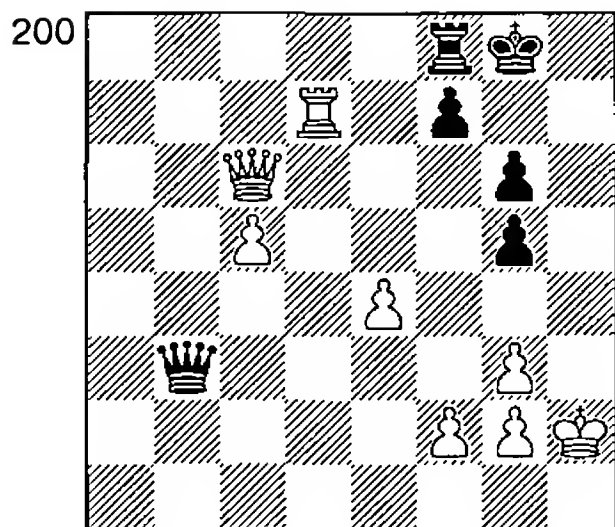
39... ♗h7

40. ♗f6+ ♗xf6

41. ♗xf6 ♗g8

42. ♗h2 ♗f8

43. ♗xc6! ...



The final finesse. White is not afraid of 43... ♖b2, with the threat of perpetual check from h8 and a1, as he has the continuation 44. ♕d6! ♕xf2 (Black gets nothing from 44... ♖h8+ 45. ♖g1 ♖a1+ because of 46. ♕d1) 45. c6 ♖g7 46. ♕xf8+! and 47. c7. A brilliant strategist must also be a strong tactician.

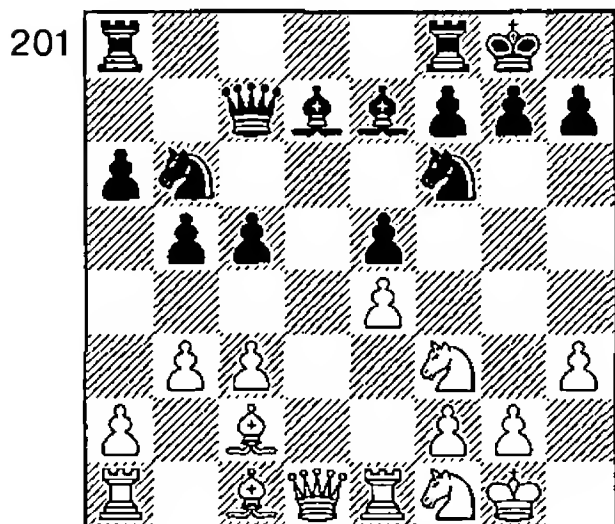
43... ♖g7
44. ♕d5 ♕b1
45. ♕d4+ ♖h7
46. c6 ...

Played with the same idea of sacrificing the queen for the rook after 46... ♖h8.

Black resigned. 1-0

No. 63:

Premature Wing Operations

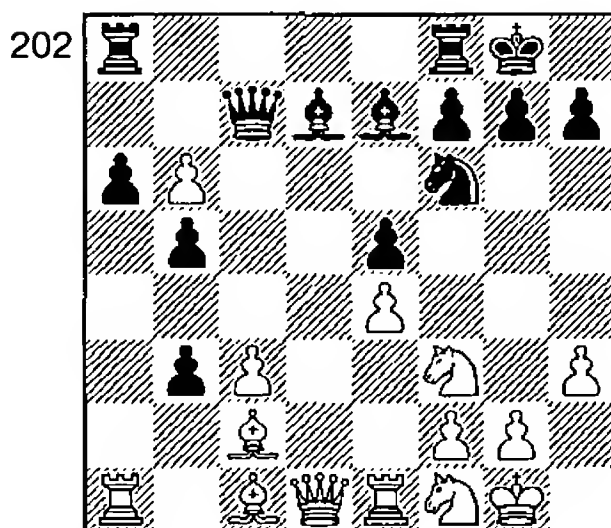


Q. Can White play actively on the queenside?

16. a4 ...

We've already seen that the thrust a2-a4 is effective in various positions arising from the Spanish Game. However, everything depends on the specifics of the position in which it is carried out. In the game **Boleslavsky-Smyslov** (Groningen 1946), White's activity on the flank is premature in view of the opponent's reply. 16. ♕e2 looked more solid, but White could also choose 16. ♔g5 or 16. ♖e3.

16... c4!
17. a5 cxb3
18. axb6 ...



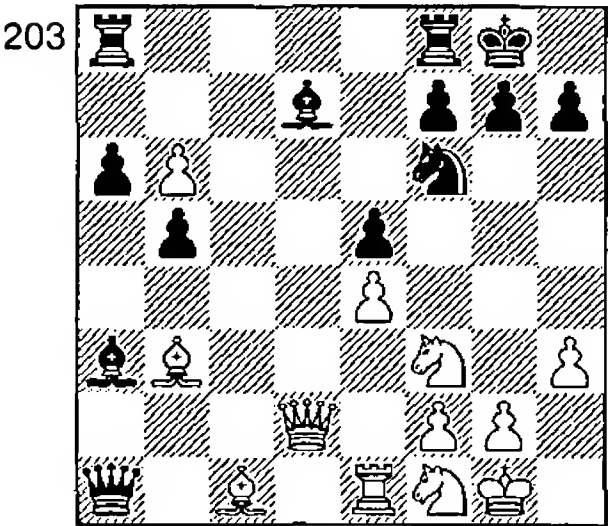
18... ♕xc3

The choice of move in any situation depends on a player's individual style or inclination. The twenty-five-year-old Smyslov, who would later become world champion, selected a move connected with a double attack that provokes great complications. However, commenting on this game twenty years later, Smyslov advised that a quieter game results from 18... bxc2! 19. bxc7 cxd1 ♕ 20. ♖xd1 ♖fc8 21. ♖xe5 ♖xc7 22. ♔f4 ♖b7.

19. ♖xb3! ...

This is the best way out for White. By sacrificing the exchange, White hopes to exploit the poor position of the black queen.

19... ♔xa1
20. ♕d2 ♙a3!



In defending against the threat of 21. ♙b2, Black avoids the risky variations resulting from 20...b4, when after 21. ♙b2 ♕a5 22. ♘xe5, White's attack is very strong, for instance 22...♙b5 23. ♘xf7 ♖xf7 24. e5, or 22...♙e6 23. ♘c6 ♕c5 24. ♖c1.

21. b7 ...

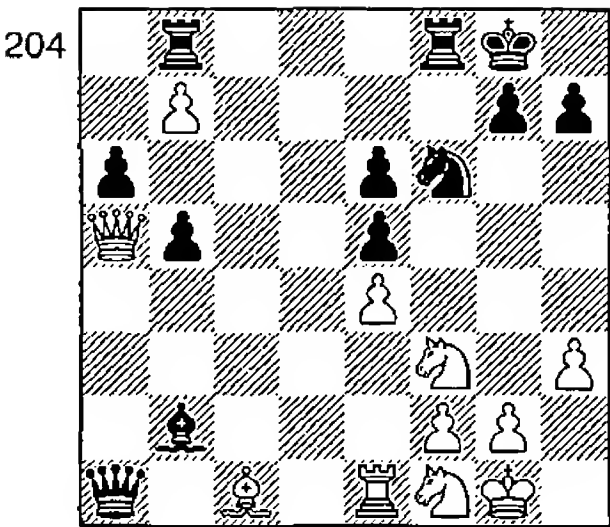
With this move, White prepares an attacking maneuver with his queen; however, it is met by a refutation. 21. ♙a2 ♙e6! would not have solved White's problems.

21... ♖ab8
22. ♙a2 ♙e6
23. ♙xe6 fxe6
24. ♕a5 ♙b2!

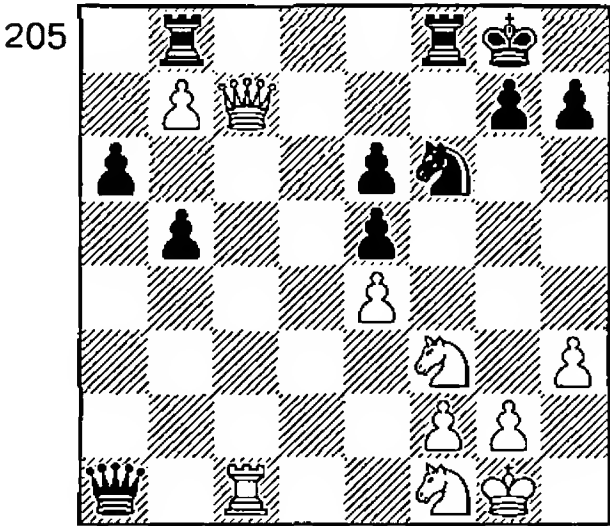
(See Diagram 204)

The perfect cooperation of the black pieces deep in enemy territory is visually striking.

25. ♕c7 ♙xc1
26. ♖xc1 ...



Unfortunately for White, the knight sortie 26. ♘g5 is undesirable because of 26...♕d4 27. ♘xe6 (or 27. ♖xc1 ♕a7) 27...♕d7!.

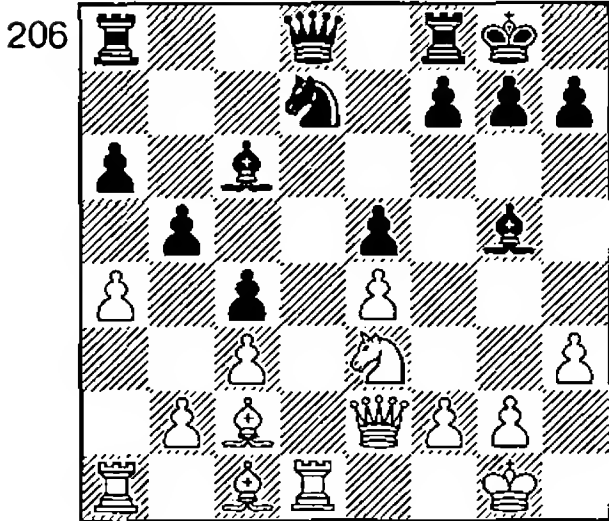


26 ... ♖xb7!

Just so. The loss of the passed pawn dissipates White's offensive. Black has a considerable material advantage; therefore, he aspires to simplify the fight by exchanges.

27. ♕c6 ♖b6 28. ♕c7 ♕a3 29. ♕xb6 ♕xc1 30. ♕xa6 ♘xe4 31. ♕xb5 ♘xf2 32. ♘xe5 ♕g5 33. ♙h2 ♕f4+ 34. ♙g1 ♘h3+ 0-1

No. 64: Tactics in Support of Strategy



Q. Can White exploit the d-file?

22. ♖d6! ...

In the game **Balashov–Keres** (Tallinn 1973), it becomes obvious that Black's apparently solid position is actually rather shaky. The rook's incursion is based on the tactical nuance 22... ♙c7 23. ♜f5 ♙xc1 24. ♖xc6. Therefore Black gets rid of the dangerous knight.

22... ♙xe3

23. ♙xe3 ♙c7

24. ♖ad1 ...

White achieves a big advantage by utilizing the power of the two bishops and his domination of the d-file.

24... ♖fe8

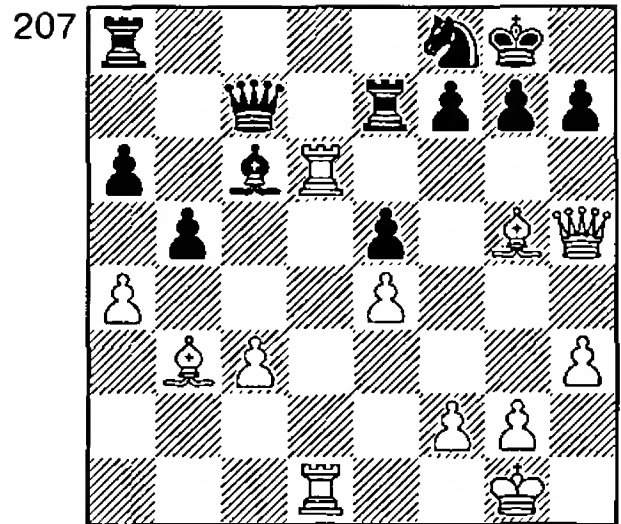
25. b3! cxb3?

The lesser evil for Black was 25... ♜f6, and if 26. axb5, then 26... ♙xb5 to contest the a2–g8 diagonal. The advantage of the bishop pair in this position is not merely theoretical, especially now that White controls the diagonal leading to f7.

26. ♙xb3 ♜f8

27. ♙h5 ♖e7

28. ♙g5! ...



28... ♖e6

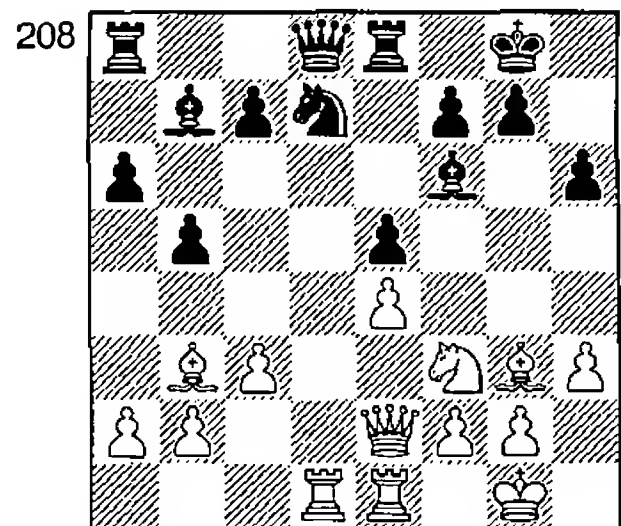
The bishop is so strong that it is necessary to offer the rook for it. Otherwise 28... ♖ee8? 29. ♖c6!. And 28... g6 weakens the dark squares around the king.

29. ♙d8! ...

This accurate maneuver deprives Black of all hope.

29... ♙b7 30. ♙xe6 ♜xe6 31. a5 h6 32. ♙xe5 b4 33. cxb4 ♙a4 34. ♖b6 ♙c8 35. ♖d3 ♜xd8 36. ♖g3 f6 37. ♖xg7+ ♙xg7 38. ♙xf6+ ♙g8 39. ♙g6+ ♙f8 40. ♖f6+ 1-0

No. 65: Steady Improvement



Q. Suggest a way for White to improve his position.

In **Tal–Krogius** (USSR Championship 1964), White has the means and the opportunity to strengthen his position. All his pieces are centralized and the pin on the d-file is uncomfortable for Black. This allows White to move the knight closer to the opponent’s king, at f5. In so doing, White must precisely evaluate a position that can arise after move 24.

19. ♖h4 ♗xh4

Black cannot allow the knight to reach f5. However, White now has an in-between move that provides a steady initiative.

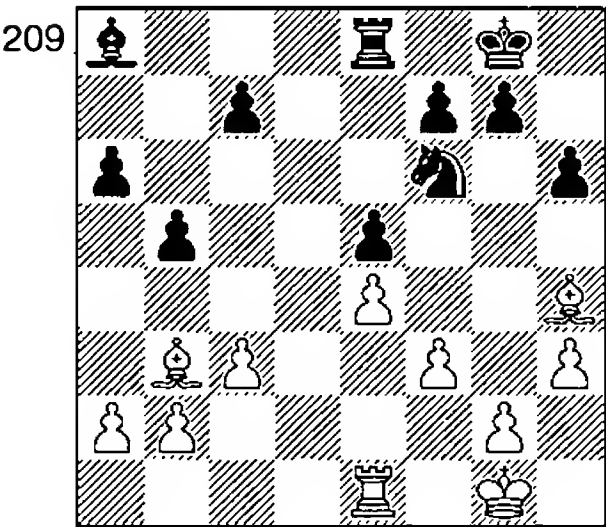
20. ♔g4! ...

A double attack on the h4-bishop and the d7-knight.

20... ♖f6

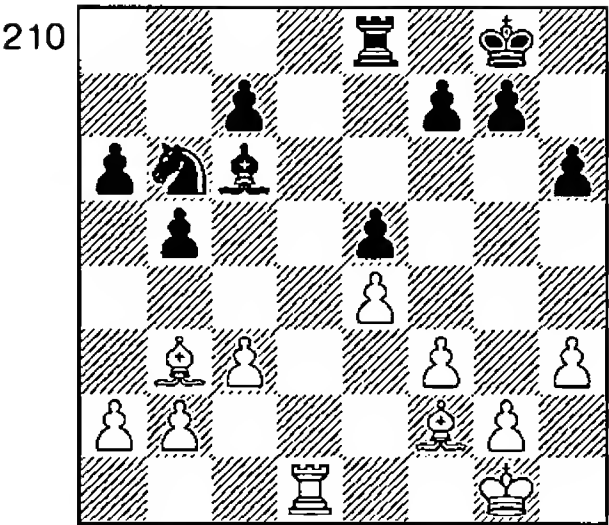
If Black moved the bishop instead, the game would be over once the white rook reached d7.

21. ♖xd8 ♗xg4
22. ♖xa8 ♗xa8
23. ♗xh4 ♖f6
24. ♖3 ...



White’s tactical operation has brought him considerable strategic success. Black finds it very difficult to defend an ending in which White has the bishop pair in an open position.

24... ♗d7
25. ♗f2 ♗c6
26. ♖d1 ♖b6



27. ♗xb6! ...

One benefit of having the advantage of the bishop pair is the possibility of exchanging one of them at a favorable moment. Now White wins material.

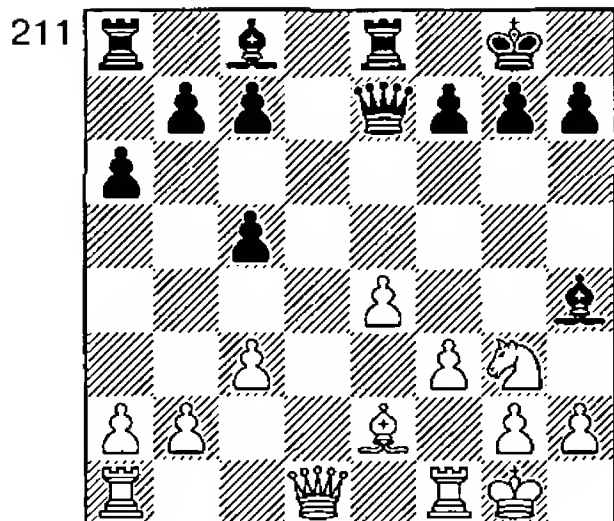
27...cxb6 28. ♖d6 ♖c8 29. ♖e6! fxe6
30. ♗xe6+ ♖f8 31. ♗xc8 a5 32. ♔f2
♔e7 33. b4 axb4 34. cxb4 ♖f6 35. ♔e3
g5 36. g3 ♗e8 37. f4 gxf4+ 38. gxf4 ♗c6
39. ♔f3 ♗e8 40. a3 ♗h5+ 41. ♗g4 ♗e8
42. ♔g3 ♗f7 43. ♗d7 ♗c4 44. ♔f3 ♗f1
45. ♗c8 ♗c4 46. ♔e3 ♗f7 47. ♗d7
♗c4 48. h4 ♔e7 1-0

This game supports GM Bronstein’s well-known statement: “How does Tal win? It is very simple: he puts his pieces in the center and then he sacrifices them somewhere.”

No. 66: A Swift Demise
(See Diagram 211)

Q. Does 17. ♗d3 a) bolster White’s position in the center, or b) let Black take the d-file?

17. ♗d3 ♔d6!
18. f4 ♖d8

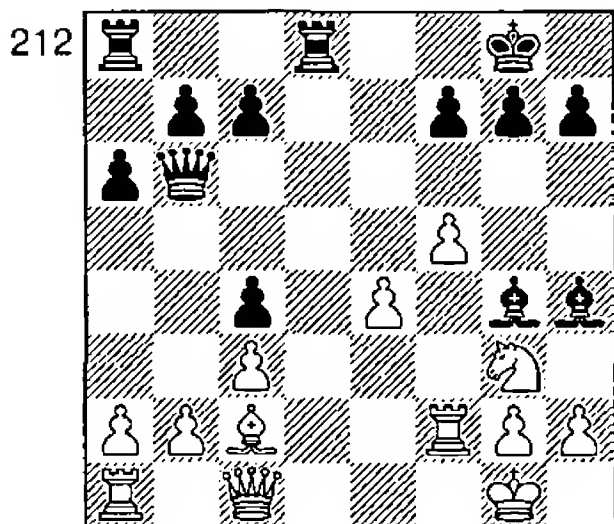


19. ♖c2 ♜b6
20. ♜c1 c4+

In the game **Brody–Chigorin** (Paris 1900), Black has shown all the pitfalls of 17. ♙d3. Black has captured the d-file and can play his light-squared bishop to g4. Coupled with the dark-square weakness in White's camp, this allows us to speak of advantage for Black.

White's play was far from perfect. In particular, it was necessary to desist from 18. f4, when 18. ♘e2 was preferable in order not to weaken g4. However, this would not have affected the positional assessment, as other weaknesses remained. White's further errors bring about a swift end.

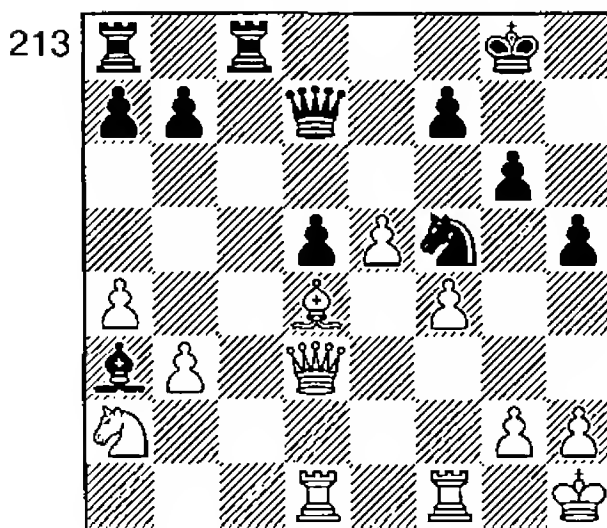
21. ♜f2 ♙g4
22. f5? ...



Better was 22. ♙f1, although after 22... ♜d7 23. b3 ♜c5, Black's advantage is obvious.

22... ♙e7!
23. h3 ♙c5
24. ♜f4 ♙xf2+
0-1

No. 67: Taking Control of a File



Q. Show how Black can capture the c-file.

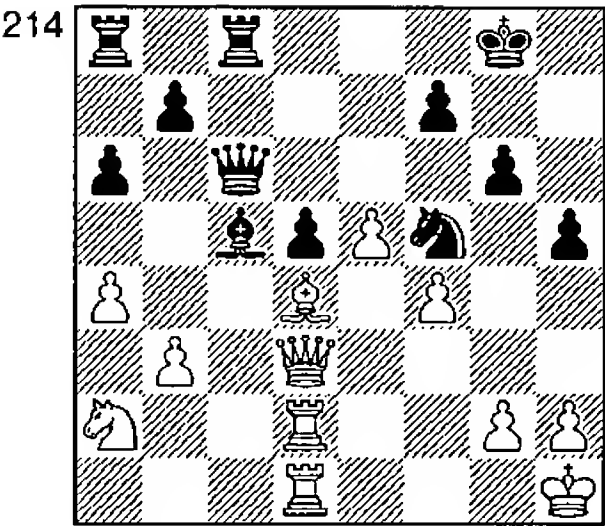
24... ♜c6!

In the game **Urzica–Romanishin** (Groningen 1972), this important maneuver enables Black to take the c-file. He threatens to invade on the second rank, the queen prevents the white knight from moving to c3, and Black is ready to capture on a4 if necessary to protect the a3-bishop, which in turn controls c1. As a result, White is compelled to separate his rooks, after which Black fully dominates the c-file.

25. ♜d2 a6
26. ♜f1 ...

White prepares to catch the prelate by 27. b4 in the event of ...b7–b5.

27... ♙c5



27. ♖c1 ...

This move leads to defeat, but if the bishop retreats or captures on c5, Black will be able to advance ...d5-d4. Black's positional advantage would then consist of more space, the strong position of the knight, and the advanced post on e3. Alternatively, 27. ♙xc5 ♚xc5 28. ♚xd5 fails to 28... ♚xd5 29. ♖xd5 ♘e3.

- 27... ♘xd4
- 28. b4 ♚xa4
- 29. ♖xc5 ♚xc5
- 30. bxc5 ♘b3
- 31. ♖f2 ♘xc5
- 32. ♚xd5 ♘e6

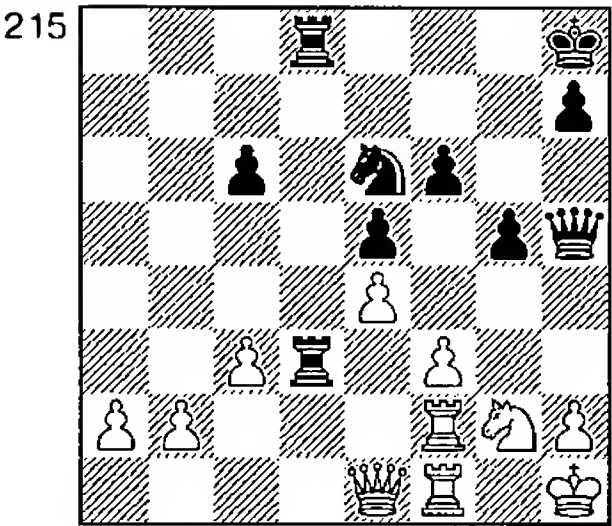
Black has used his time profitably and has an extrapawn to show for it. White can only hope for a tactical trick to save him.

33. h3 ♚d4 34. ♚f3 ♖d8 35. ♙h2 b5 36. ♘c3 ♚d3 37. ♚c6 ♚c4 38. ♚f3 ♖d3 39. ♚a8+ ♖d8 40. ♚f3 ♘d4 0-1

No. 68: Deep Thought
(See Diagram 215)

Q. Show how Black can make use of the initiative.

In Tarrasch–Chigorin (Match [7] 1893), Black sacrificed a pawn in order to loosen the enemy king's position, but

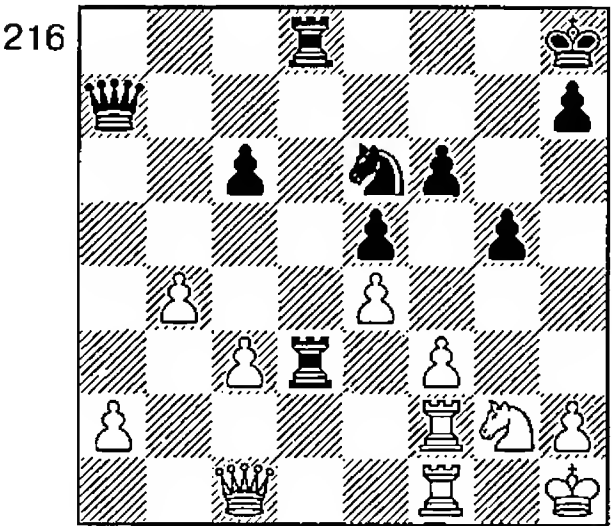


White has erected an apparently strong defense. However, White's pieces are passive, and Black exploits his factor in original fashion.

- 37.... ♚f7!
- 38. b4? ...

Tarrasch simplifies his opponent's task by weakening the queenside. However, it is very difficult to discern Chigorin's plan even at this stage.

- 38... ♚a7!
- 39. ♚c1 ...



- 39... ♚a6!

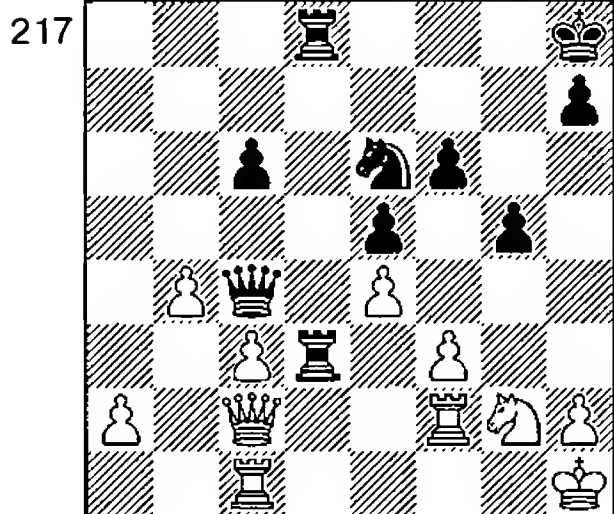
Only now does Chigorin's intention become clear. Such depth of thought is the purview of a great master! The arrival of the queen on c4 can only be prevented by weakening d4, and if the white knight moves to e3, Black wins the f4 square.

40. ♖c2? ...

The only way to avoid the immediate loss of material was 40. ♔gl ♖c4 41. ♜c2. But it's all over now.

40... ♔c4

41. ♜c1 ...



41... ♜xc3!

Excellent strategic plans are often crowned by tactical operations.

42. ♖xc3 ♜xc3

0-1

Given the inevitable loss of material, White resigned. Note that Black's strategic plan was made possible because of his firm possession of the d-file.

A. Evaluate the diagram position.

B. Find a plan for White and give variations to support your conclusions.

In **Kotov–Flohr** (Moscow 1944), White's pieces are well placed for active play; they are ready to fight for control of open files and diagonals. We have spoken about the significance of open files, but the domination of diagonals is equally important. In order to control a diagonal it is often necessary to remove an opposing bishop from the diagonal by means of deflection, exchange, or sacrifice; to eliminate pawn barriers that block the diagonal; and to concentrate the remaining pieces for a local advantage in force that will prove decisive. The defender must remain alert to possible tactical threats.

There are no noticeable weaknesses in Black's camp and his position is quite defensible. At the moment Black's kingside is still off-limits to White's pieces, but White contrives to weaken this defense by forcing Black to move his pawns, thereby exposing the black king. One must frequently find ways to create a weakness in an enemy position; sometimes this is achieved through subtle maneuvering and in some cases, as in this game, vigorous action does the trick.

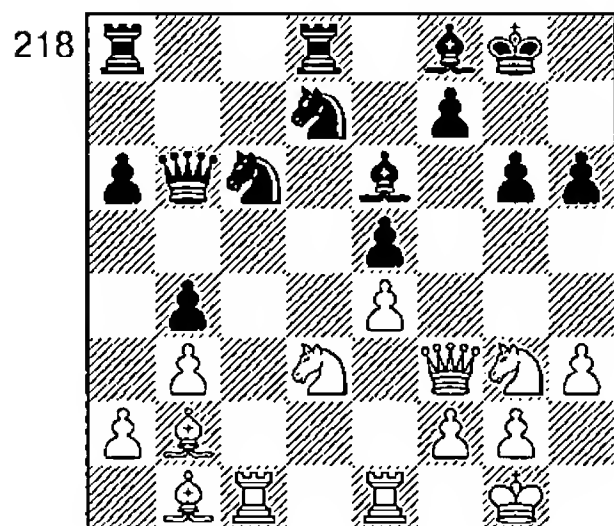
27. ♞f5! ...

This is not yet a sacrifice, as once the knight is captured Black's light-squared bishop will be lost. But the knight is excellently placed: It is very active and it constrains the activity of the black pieces.

27... ♜ac8

No. 69:

Diagonals Are Important, Too



28. h4! ...

The threat to advance the pawn further forces Black to weaken g6.

28 ... f6

Now that g6 has been weakened, White will use all his resources to exploit it. Please note that White has created this situation by means of one-move forcing threats that can have diverse consequences.

When one side makes a move that presents a danger to the other side, a threat is created. The consequences of the threat can range from checkmate to obtaining a minimal positional advantage.

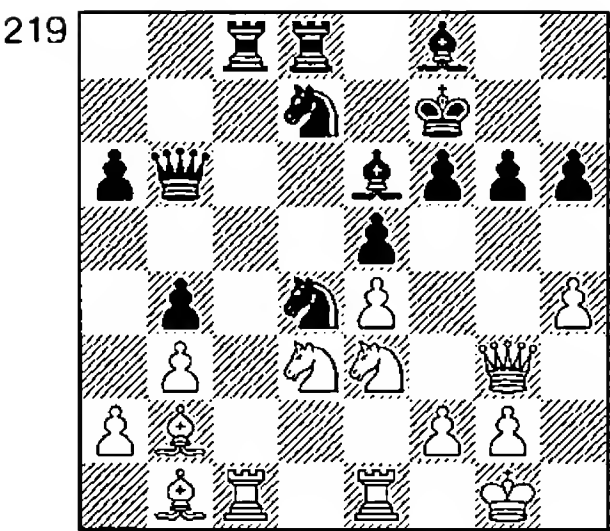
As Nimzowitsch noted, the threat is often stronger than the execution. Thus, there are no direct actions when the threat is created, and it is only a matter of how the opponent responds, and the opportunities that then arise. Often the side with the initiative can use simple one-move threats to create a situation that allows for complicated tactics where a move contains several threats at once.

29. ♖g3 ♙f7

30. ♞e3! ...

The knight has concluded its mission on f5, and now it finds a new purpose on d5. Black won't be able to tolerate the strong horse in the center and will be compelled to exchange it. This will lead to the opening of the diagonal for the light-squared bishop. When we consider the weakened g6 square on this diagonal, we can conclude that Black's defense becomes increasingly complicated.

30... ♞d4



31. ♖xc8 ...

It is known that exchanges usually benefit the defender, but in this position Black cannot use the c-file because all the invasion squares are reliably covered by White's pieces. White also does not want to allow Black to initiate the exchange because that would divert the white rook from the e-file.

31... ♖xc8

32. ♞d5 ...

Black cannot abide the opponent's knight on the central square. On 32... ♙b7 there follows 33. ♙xd4 exd4 34. ♞f4 and White wins.

32... ♙xd5

33. exd5 ♞f5

34. ♖h3! ...

This move highlights the hopelessness of Black's position. It is impossible to stop 35. h5. If Black himself plays 34...h5, then 35. ♞xe5+! fxe5 36. ♙xf5 is decisive.

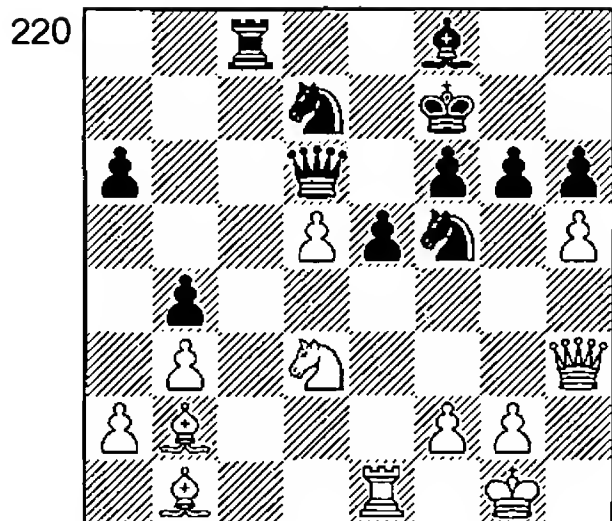
34... ♙d6

35. h5 ...

(See Diagram 220)

Now White's plan is complete; Black's pawn structure is ripped to shreds.

35... ♞e7



36. **h**xg6+ ♔g8

On 36...♖xg6, White planned 37. ♕h5! with decisive threats.

37. ♕c1! ♔xd5

38. ♕xh6 ♖c3

39. g7! ...

White has other ways to win, but this is the simplest.

37... ♕xg7

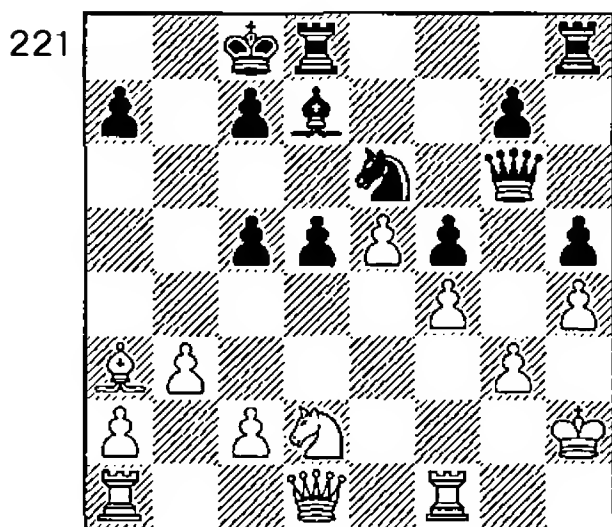
40. ♖g4 ♖f5

41. ♖xb4 1-0

Black resigned, as 41...♖xh6 42. ♖xd5 ♖xg4 43. ♖xc3 is hopeless.

No. 70:

Battery on the Long Diagonal



Q. Does Black have compensation for his poor pawn structure?

In **Gunsberg—Chigorin** (Match [6] 1890), White's position is not ideal either. White's pawn advances have weakened his castled position. Black intends to exploit this by creating a deadly queen-and-bishop battery along the h1-a8 diagonal.

19... ♕c6!

20. ♖f3 ♕b7!

21. ♔d2 d4

22. ♖e1 ...

White understands that if he plays quietly, Black will grab the initiative. Therefore, he tries to create counterplay by attacking the c5-pawn. However, the kingside loses one more piece that's needed for defense.

22... ♔e8!

23. ♖d3 ...

After 23. ♔a5?!, Black develops an attack that can hardly be repelled: 23... ♕c6 24. ♔xa7 d3 25. cxd3 ♖xd3.

23... ♕c6!

Capturing the main diagonal is a large positional achievement for Black. This creates the opportunity for combinational shots and limits White's actions. Black will now bring in the reserves to assist in the assault; to this end, Chigorin begins systematic preparations for the ...g7-g5 break.

24. ♖f2 ♖dg8!

Black repositions the rooks to make the coming action on the kingside more effective.

25. ♖af1 ♖h6

26. ♔a5 ♖b6

27. ♔e1? ...

Black shows flexibility in carrying out his plans. After 27. ♔xb6 axb6, Black has an obvious advantage thanks to his prevalence in the center and better pawn struc-

ture. Therefore, White refuses to trade queens; however, this was White's best chance, as he is now deprived of counterplay and reduced to passivity.

- 27... ♖g6
28. c4 ♖g4
29. ♕c1 ♗c6!

The pressure on c5 has eased, so the queen returns to the long diagonal right away.

30. ♖g1 ♖h8
31. ♖b2 ...

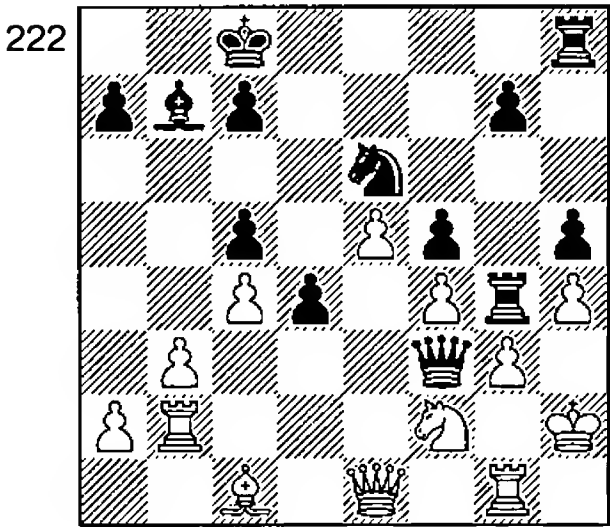
White knows where the attack should come from, but he does not know when and how it will occur. Thus, his desire to look for chances on the queenside is clear.

- 31... ♗f3

Not missing the chance to increase the activity of the queen.

32. ♘f2 ...

On 32. ♗e2, checkmate is possible by 32... ♖xg3 33. ♖xg3 ♗h1.



- 32... g5!!

Black carries out the well-prepared and decisive break on the kingside.

33. ♘xg4? ...

If 33. fxg5, then 33... f4! with the same idea as in the game. But even after the better 33. ♗e2 gxh4 34. ♗xf3 ♕xf3 35. ♘xg4, Black should win. For exam-

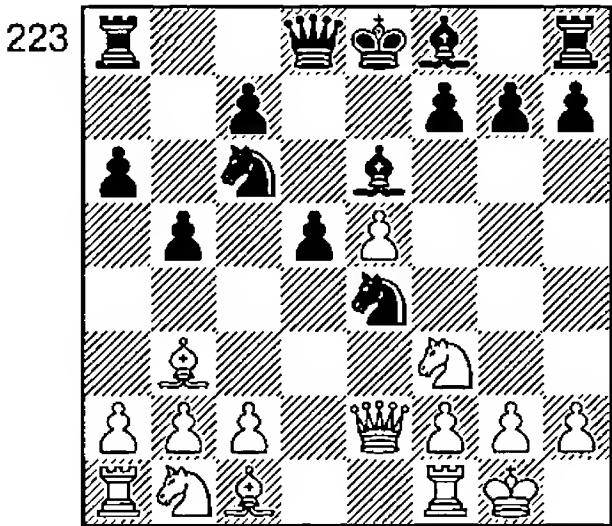
ple, 35... hxg4 36. gxh4 ♖xh4+ 37. ♗g3 ♖h3+ 38. ♗f2 ♕e4 39. ♗e1 d3 and the knight jumps to d4.

- 33... hxg4
34. ♗f1 ♖xh4+!
35. gxh4 g3+
36. ♖xg3 ♗xf1

Now Black has more material in addition to an attack.

37. ♖g1 ♗f3 38. fxg5 ♘f4 39. ♕xf4 ♗xf4+ 40. ♗h3 ♕f3 41. ♖f2 ♕g4+ 42. ♗g2 ♗e4+ 43. ♗h2 ♗e3 44. ♖gg2 d3 45. g6 ♗xe5+ 46. ♖g3 ♗d4 47. ♖d2 ♗f6 48. ♖gxd3 ♗xh4+ 49. ♗g1 ♗g5 50. ♖g2 ♗xg6 51. ♗f2 ♗f6 52. ♖d5 ♗h4+ 53. ♗g1 f4 54. ♖gd2 ♗e1+ 55. ♗h2 ♕f3 0-1

No. 71: A Surprising Reply



Q. Is 9...g5: a) good for Black, providing counterplay; or b) wrong, resulting in defeat?

- 9 ... g5?

In the game **Boleslavsky–Stoltz** (Saltsjöbaden Interzonal 1948), Black assumed that White had to defend against the advance of the pawn to the fourth rank, thereby giving Black active play. Indeed, Black could cook up a strong attack after 10. h3 g4!; however,

White finds a very strong move that demanded profound strategic understanding and deep calculation.

10. c4! ...

Now the opposition doesn't have enough time for a kingside attack. On 10...g4, there could follow 11. cxd5 ♗xd5 12. ♖xg5 ♖xg5 13. ♗xg5 and Black's flank attack is doomed to failure, while his position in the center is awful.

10 ... bxc4?

With this move, Black still holds the center, but now White can carry out a plan based on the fact that Black's kingside has been weakened by ...g7-g5. Perhaps 10...dxc4 would be the lesser evil, but even then after 11. ♗c2 ♖c5 12. ♖d1 White has a dangerous attack against the enemy king stuck in the center.

11. ♗a4 ♗d7

The black bishop is diverted from e6, where the pawn then delivers the decisive blow. Even worse is 11...♗d7 12. ♖d4 ♖xd4 13. ♗xd7+ ♖xd7 14. ♗d1 ♗c5 15. ♗e3.

12. e6! ...

The main purpose of this shot is to expose the black monarch from the side.

12... fxe6

13. ♗xc6 ♗xc6

14. ♖e5! ...

The knight hop into the center square completes White's plan. Now the road to the kingside is opened.

14... ♗d6

Black could merely offer more stubborn resistance by 14...h5 15. ♖xc6 ♗d6 16. ♖d4 ♗g7.

15. ♗h5+ ♖e7

16. ♗xg5+ ♖xg5

17. ♗xg5+ ♖e8

18. ♗h5+ ♖e7

19. ♗f7+

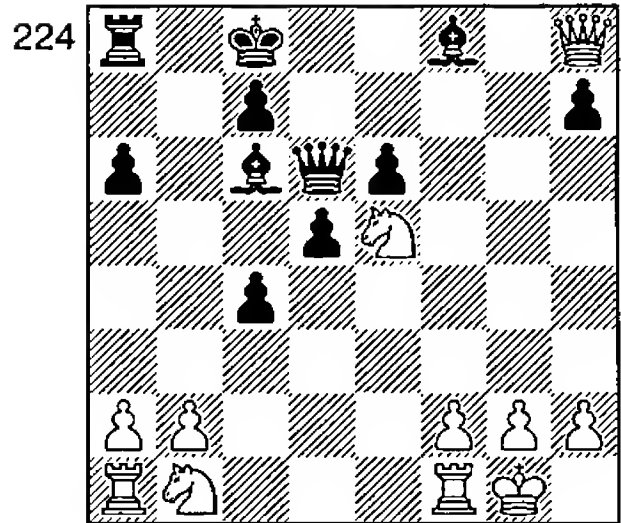
♖d8

20. ♗f6+

♖c8

21. ♗xh8

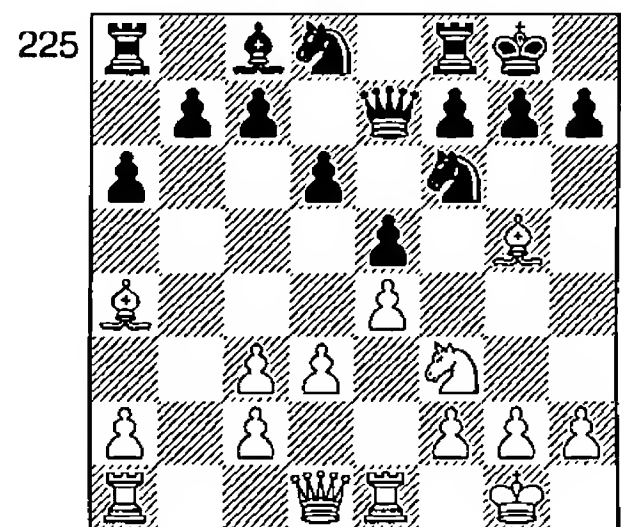
...



Black could easily have resigned right now; further resistance is futile.

21... ♗e8 22. ♖d2 ♖b7 23. ♖df3 ♗e7 24. ♗g8 ♗h6 25. ♗g3 ♗g7 26. ♖fe1 ♗f6 27. b3 cxb4 28. ♖ab1 c5 29. ♖xb3+ ♖a7 30. ♗f4 ♖c8 31. ♖eb1 ♖c7 32. ♖d4 ♗xe5 33. ♗xe5 c4 34. ♖c6+ 1-0

No. 72: Wrong Way to Break the Pin



Q. Evaluate this and choose a plan for White.

The key feature of the position, from Schlechter–Tarrasch (Match [5] 1911), is

the pin on the f6-knight. If Black should manage to relieve this situation, he may even gain the edge by attacking White's weak pawn chain on the queenside. Thus, White should fight to preserve the pin or "sell it dearly" by inducing some new weakness in Black's position.

11. ♖d2 ...

This modest retreat of the knight signals the start of a subtle strategic plan. White wishes to reposition it via the route f1-e3-d5. Once it reaches this central point, it will attack the f6-knight and threaten an exchange that will ruin Black's kingside pawn structure. Therefore Black has to hurry. Yet, if Black attempts to eliminate the pin by ...h7-h6 and ...g7-g5, White is prepared to advance his pawns on the kingside to attack Black's king.

11... ♗e6

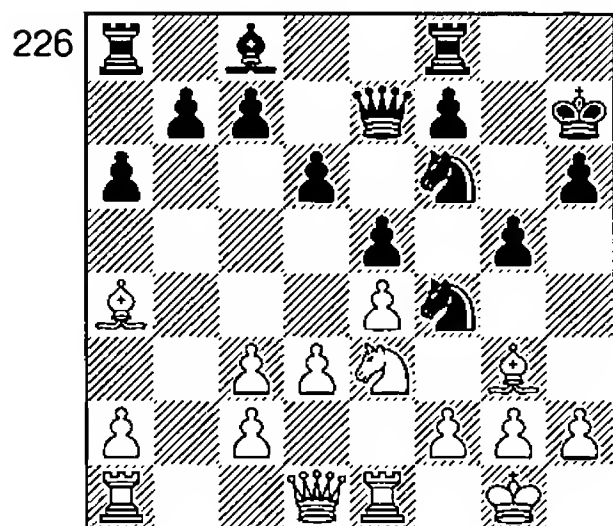
12. ♕h4 ♗f4

13. ♘f1 h6?

Black's position would be quite satisfactory after 13... ♘g6, which would compel the white bishop to leave the h4-d8 diagonal. Black could then focus his attention to the queenside. However, Black sees nothing wrong with the chosen continuation.

14. ♘e3 g5

15. ♕g3 ♖h7



16. c4 ...

White takes preventive measures against an attack on the queenside.

16... c6

17. c3 b5

18. cxb5 axb5

19. ♖b3 ♗e6

20. ♔d2 ♗a7

Black would seem to have gained the initiative. He threatens to exchange on b3 and then to capture on a1.

21. ♖ab1 ♔h8

22. f3 ♖g8

Black's queenside attack has come to naught and it is difficult for him to devise a new plan. In such situations, there is nothing to do but to meet the opponent's threats as they arise.

23. ♔h1 ♗c7

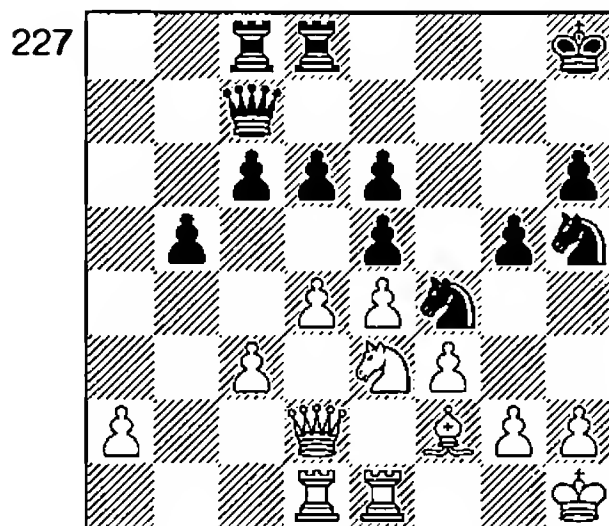
24. d4 ♘6h5

White's next few moves are designed to implement the break with f3-f4.

25. ♕f2 ♖ac8

26. ♖bd1 ♖gd8

27. ♕xe6 fxe6



28. ♘g4 ♔g7

29. ♕e3 ♗f6

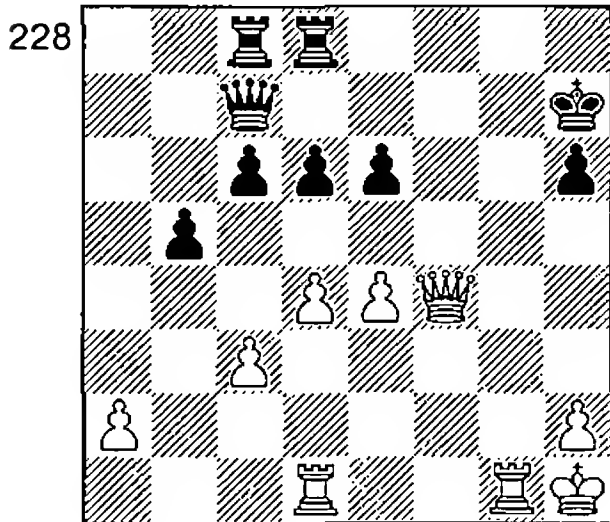
30. ♘xf6 ♔xf6

31. g3 ♘g6

32. f4! ...

White strikes the decisive blow. The attack on g5 and h6 cannot be stopped. This shows once again how tactics go hand-in-hand with strategy.

32... exf4
 33. gxf4 gxf4
 34. ♖xf4 ♖xf4
 35. ♔xf4+ ♔g7
 36. ♖g1+ ♖h7



37. ♔f6?! ...

This wins but it is less efficient than 37. ♖d3, when Black must either lose material or allow mate by 38. ♔xh6+ and 39. ♖h3. This beautiful combination would have crowned an otherwise perfectly played game.

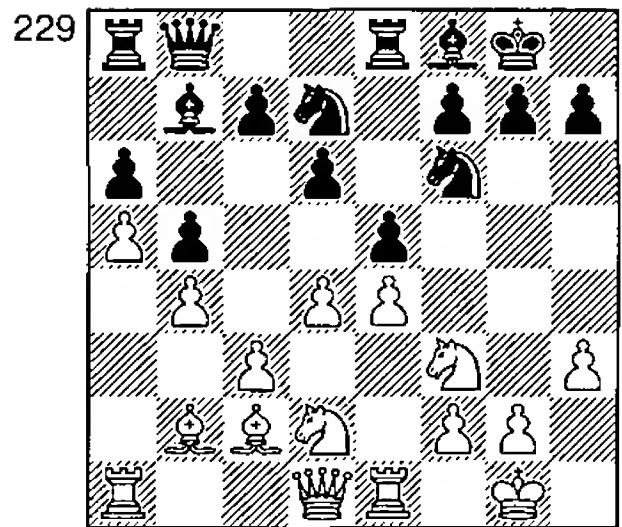
37... ♖f8 38. ♔g6+ ♔h8 39. ♔xe6 ♖ce8 40. ♔h6+ ♔h7 41. ♔xd6 ♔xe4+ 42. ♖g2 ♔e6 43. ♔g3 ♔h6 44. ♖dgl ♖e6 45. ♔g4 ♖ef6 46. ♖g3 ♔h7 47. d5 c5 48. ♖h3 ♖h6 49. ♔e2 1-0

No. 73: What to Do with the Bishops?

(See Diagram 229)

Q. Find a way to activate White's bishops.

Bishops need open diagonals, so the simple answer is that the position should be opened as much as possible.



17. c4! bxc4

18. ♖a4! ...

In the game Savon–Mukhin (Sochi 1973), the strength of this move compels Black to close the a4–e8 diagonal, but then the c6-pawn becomes an object of attack.

18... c6

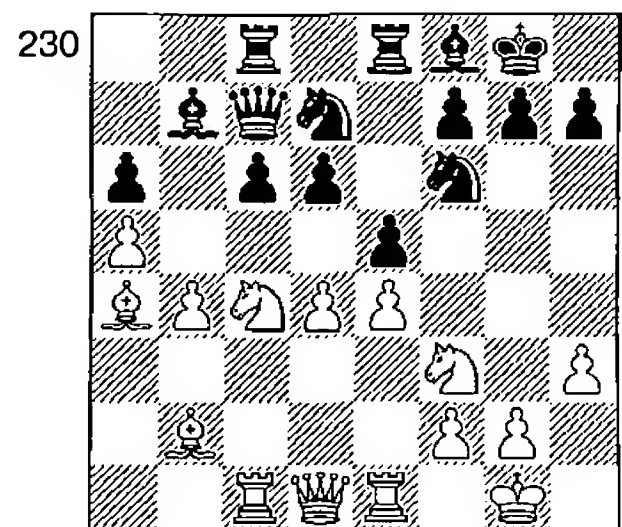
19. ♖xc4 ♔c7

20. ♖c1 ...

Even stronger was 20. dxe5 to resolve the tension in the center.

20... ♖ac8

Black loses a pawn after 20...exd4 21. ♔xd4 d5 22. ♖b6 ♖xb6 23. axb6 ♔f4 24. e5 ♔xd4 25. ♖xd4.

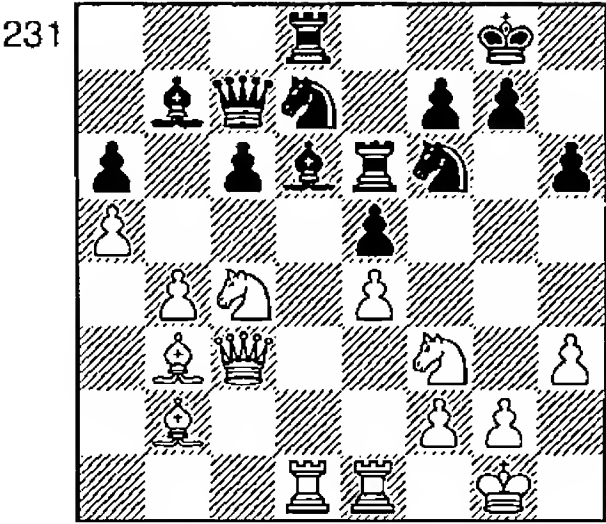


21. dxe5! ...

Now the e5-pawn becomes a target.

21... dxe5

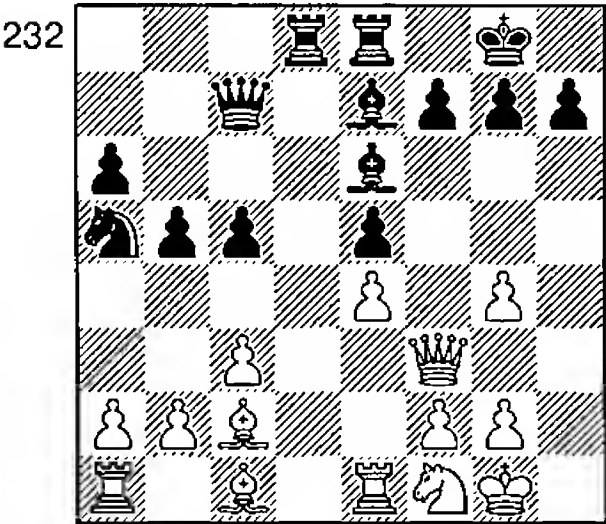
22. ♖b3
23. ♖c3
24. ♖cd1
25. ♗b3
- h6
- ♗d6
- ♖e6
- ♖d8



White has focused all his forces on conquering the point e5.

26. ♖xd6 ♖xd6
27. ♖xd6 ♖xd6
28. ♖d1 ♖e7
29. ♖xe5 ♖xe5
30. ♖xd8+ ♖xd8
31. ♖xe5 c5
32. ♖xc5 ♖xe4
33. ♖a7 ♖d5
34. ♖xf6 ♖xf6
35. ♖b8+ 1-0

No. 74: Playing Mechanically



Q. Does 18...h6 fit the spirit of the diagram position?

- 18 ...
- h6?

This was a serious error in the game Byvshev–Smyslov (USSR Champion-

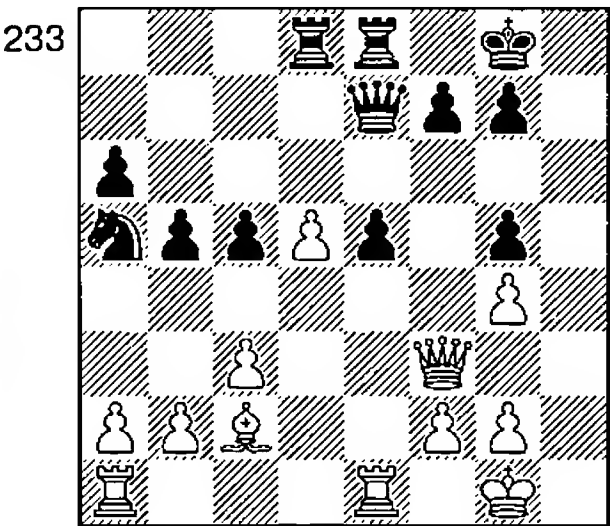
ship 1952). Black needlessly weakens his castled position, when it was necessary to occupy the d-file with the rooks to impede the knight from reaching d5.

19. ♖e3
- ♗g5

This maneuver was the reason for ... h7-h6. There are a number of variations from the Spanish Game in which Black plays similarly; however, in this specific position he was not compelled to do so. It is difficult to understand why one of the strongest players on the planet would have made such a move. He probably simply underestimated his opponent. Having seen this game, I am sure that the reader will fret less about his own errors: they are the inevitable companions of creativity.

20. ♖d5
- ♗xd5
21. ♗xg5
- hgx5
22. exd5
- ♖e7

This is a loss of tempo. Black should block the b1-h7 diagonal by 22...g6. As a result of Black's inaccurate play, White has an excellent position. He has a passed pawn in the center and good attacking possibilities on both wings.



23. a4!
- ...

Precisely! Black has to cede the a-file because 23...b4 is met by the double attack 24. ♖d3.

23... ♖c4
 24. axb5 axb5
 25. ♖a6 ♖d6

White threatened 26. ♖h3. The move 25...g6 fails to 26. ♖xg6 fxg6 27. ♖xg6+ and White wins. In light of subsequent events, I suggest 25...♖d6 instead of the game move.

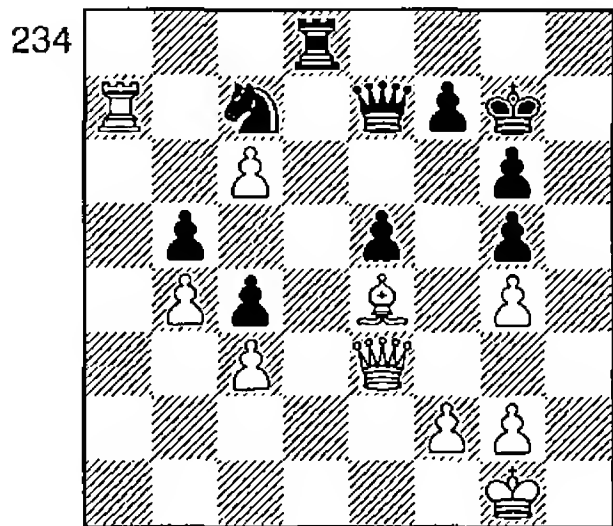
26. ♖c6 g6
 27. b3 ♖xc6
 28. dxc6 ♖b6

If Black were to put the knight on d6, then White would get four pawns for the bishop after 29. ♖d5! ♖c8 30. ♖xg6 ♖b6 31. ♖xf7+, when his compensation would be more than sufficient.

29. ♖e4 ♖g7
 30. ♖e2 c4
 31. ♖b1 ♖c5
 32. b4 ♖e7
 33. ♖a1 ♖d8

Of no help is 33...♖a8 because of 34. ♖a5.

34. ♖e3 ♖a8
 If 34...♖d5, then 35. ♖a7 wins.
 35. ♖a7 ♖c7



36. ♖b6! ♖c8

In case of 36...♖d1+, White fends off the attack easily. One possible variation is 37. ♖h2 ♖f6 38. ♖xc7 ♖f4+ 39. g3

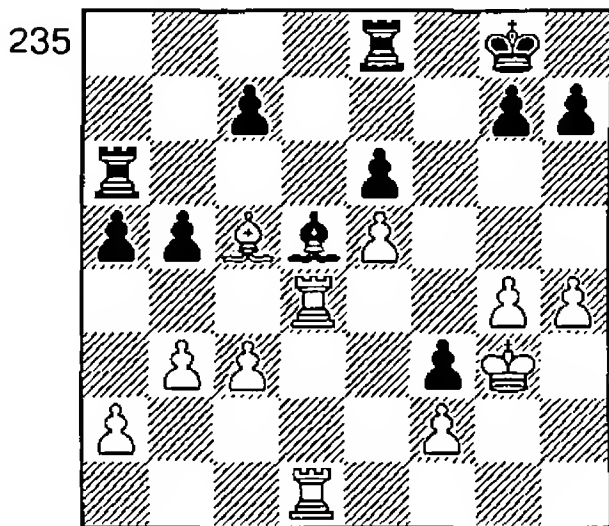
♖xf2+ 40. ♖g2 ♖d2 41. ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 42. ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 43. c7. However, the game move doesn't save Black either. White has a serious advantage — his rook is on the seventh rank and the centralized bishop is active. Plus, all Black's pieces are tied to the defense of the pinned knight. No wonder White finds a fatal tactical blow.

37. ♖xc7 ...

The exchange sacrifice is the simplest way to victory. Black's counterattack poses no danger.

37...♖c7 38. ♖xb5 ♖a8 39. ♖xc4 ♖d8 40. ♖d5 ♖a1+ 41. ♖h2 ♖h8+ 42. ♖g3 ♖h4+ 43. ♖f3 ♖h2 44. ♖d2 ♖g1 45. ♖e2 ♖h4 46. ♖f3 ♖h8 47. ♖d6 ♖h1 48. ♖xe5+ ♖h7 49. ♖d2 ♖a1 50. ♖d3 ♖f1+ 51. ♖e2 ♖b1+ 52. ♖d4 ♖c1 53. ♖e3 ♖a3 54. ♖xg5 ♖a7+ 55. ♖c5 ♖c7 56. ♖e5 ♖a7+ 57. ♖c5 ♖c7 58. ♖c4 ♖a3 59. ♖d5 ♖e5 60. ♖d4 ♖e2+ 61. ♖c5 ♖e1 62. ♖f6 ♖xc3+ 63. ♖d6 ♖d3 64. ♖xf7+ ♖h6 65. ♖f4+ ♖g7 66. ♖e5+ 1-0

No. 75: Another Exchange Sacrifice



Q. Is the move 28...♖c6: a) a useful one, corresponding to the spirit of the position; or b) an error, leaving Black in a difficult state?

28... ♖c6?

In Karpov-Korchnoi (World Championship [14] 1978), Black pursues the misconceived idea of chasing the bishop from c5. Preferable was 28...a4!.

29. ♖xd5! ...

Of this idea, Karpov wrote, "For the rook White gains a bishop and a pawn. In addition, the breakaway pawn at f3 is already attacked by the king, and Black's queenside pawns also come under attack."

29... exd5

30. ♖xd5 ♖ce6

31. ♙d4 c6

32. ♖c5! ♖f8

White would have also kept the advantage after 32...♖d8 33. ♙xf3 ♖d5 34. ♖xd5 cxd5 35. a3! g6 36. ♙g3 ♖e8 37. f4.

33. a4! ...

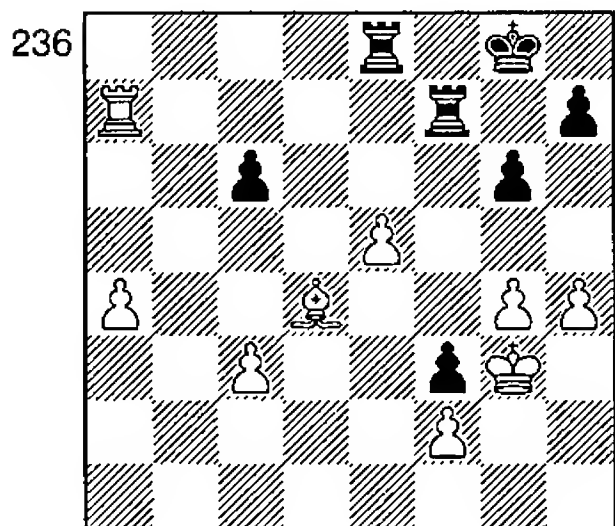
This completely destroys Black's position; the rooks are now unable to defend all the weak points.

33... bxa4

34. bxa4 g6

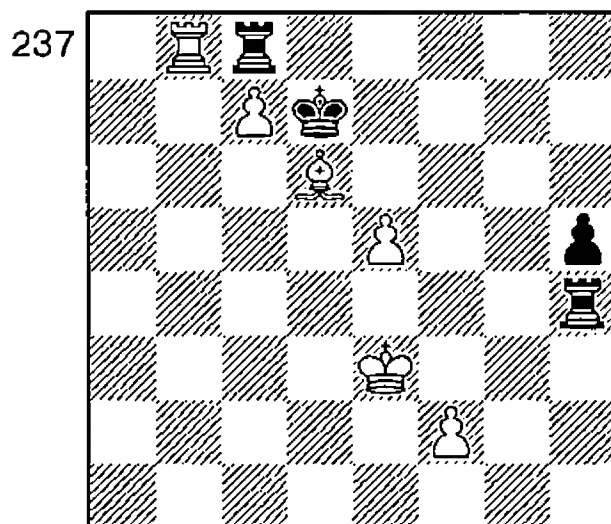
35. ♖xa5 ♖ee8

36. ♖a7 ♖f7



37. ♖a6 ♖c7 38. ♙c5 ♖cc8 39. ♙d6 ♖a8 40. ♖xc6 ♖xa4 41. ♙xf3 h5 42. gxh5 gxh5 43. c4 ♖a2 44. ♖b6 ♙f7 45.

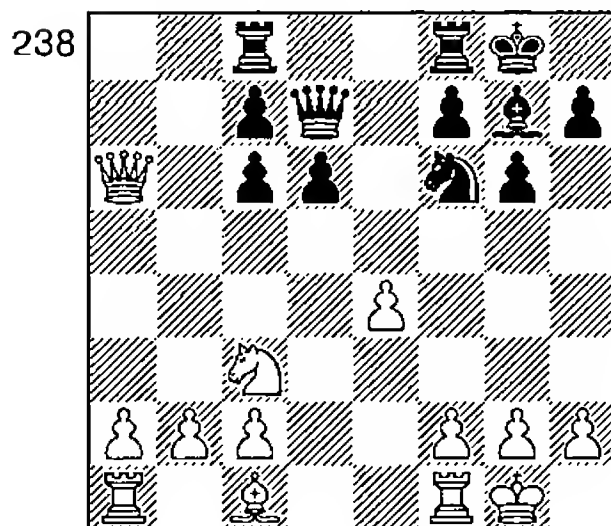
c5 ♖a4 46. c6! ♙e6 47. c7 ♙d7 48. ♖b8 ♖c8 49. ♙e3 ♖xh4:



50. e6+

1-0

No. 76: Two Open Files for a Pawn



A. Does Black have compensation for his pawn minus?

B. Suggest a plan for Black.

In Nimzowitsch–Capablanca (St. Petersburg 1914), White may have won a pawn, but Black's achievements are no less significant. He has completely mobilized his forces and strengthened the center, plus he has the excellent a- and e-files for the rooks and a good bishop. The depth of Capablanca's idea

is evident in the fact that Black can simply and naturally increase his activity by ... ♖a8 , ... ♜fe8 or ... ♞fb8 , ... ♞f6-g4-e5 , and so on. Meanwhile, White's possibilities are much more modest and it is difficult to suggest an arrangement for his pieces. Capablanca would later write that the critics who condemned Nimzowitsch's subsequent play were treating him unfairly, since none of them suggested a satisfactory continuation for White.

Thus, we can confidently state that Nimzowitsch did not win the pawn, rather it was Capablanca who carried out a positional sacrifice of the pawn. Black is going to occupy the open files with his rooks and, if possible, post his knight at c4, all while maintaining his positional plus. He masks this plan with a direct attack on the e-pawn.

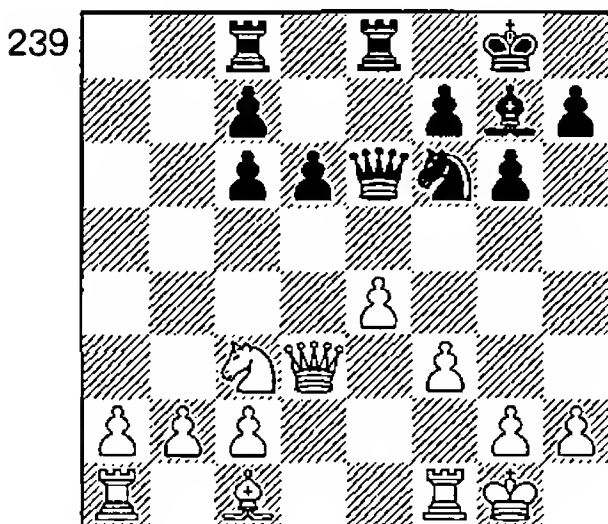
14 ... ♜fe8

15. ♞d3 ...

White wishes to consolidate his position in order to later convert his extra pawn. However, he fails to take adequate measures against Black's plan. Max Euwe recommended 15. f3 so as to preempt Black's next move.

15... ♞e6

16. f3 ...



16 ... ♞d7!

16...d5 would have allowed immediate equality. By transferring the knight to c4, Black will maximize the effectiveness of all his pieces. Black is in control of the situation and gives his opponent a difficult choice. Thus, not only is the game instructional from a chess point of view, the psychological aspect is interesting as well.

Because of the extra pawn, Nimzowitsch feels compelled to play for a win. Therefore, he refuses the drawing continuation 17. b3!. Given that 17... ♞c5 18. ♞d2 ♞a4 19. ♞xa4 ♞xa1 20. c3 doesn't work, Black has nothing better than 17... ♞e5 18. ♞e3 ♞c4 19. ♞d3 ♞e5 20. ♞d2 ♞c4 21. ♞d3 (21. bxc4? ♞xc4 22. ♞b2 ♞b8) 21... ♞e5 22. ♞e2 ♞c4 etc. If White tries 23. bxc4, it will not bring him anything after 23... ♞xc3 24. ♞b1 ♞a8 25. a3 ♞a4 . No better is 23. ♞d2 ♞d4+ 24. ♞h1 ♞xd2 25. ♞xd2 ♞f6 .

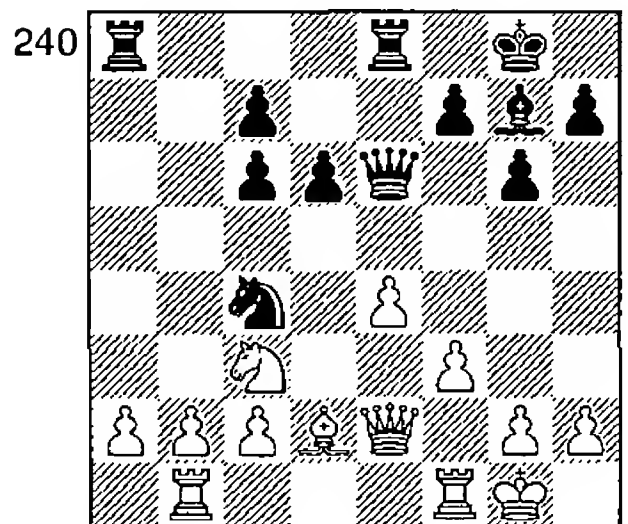
17. ♞d2 ♞e5

18. ♞e2 ♞c4

19. ♞ab1 ...

Here 19. b3 loses to 19... ♞xd2 20. ♞xd2 ♞e5 21. ♞a4 ♞d4+ 22. ♞xd4 ♞xd4+ 23. ♞h1 ♞xa1 .

19... ♞a8



Capablanca wrote that Black's pieces are very well placed and their superior coordination will soon allow him to win back the pawn while retaining better play. However, the reader should note that if we were to remove the bishops from the board, Black's pressure would be considerably lessened. Such is the strength of this one piece in the position.

20. a4? ...

An obvious weakening. Better practical chances were offered by 20. b3, though after 20... ♞xd2 21. ♞xd2 ♖a3, Black could eventually win the a2-pawn. Still, White's position would be stable. On 20. a3 instead, there follows 20... ♞eb8.

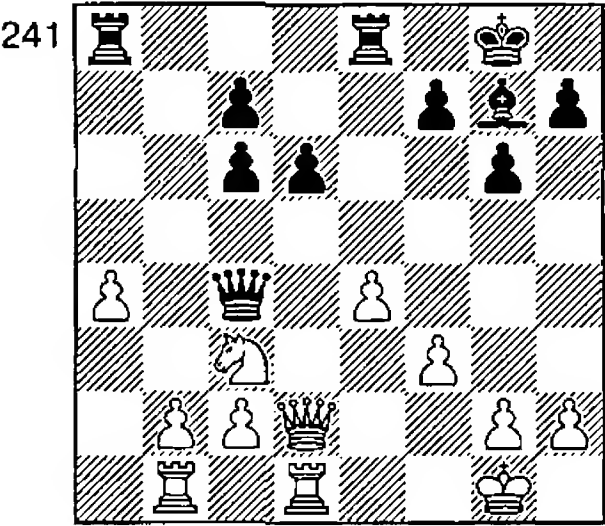
20... ♞xd2

21. ♞xd2 ♞c4!

This is an important resource, otherwise the white pawns become impregnable after 22. b3.

22. ♞fd1 ...

The last chance to consolidate the position was to give away the a4-pawn by 22. ♞e2. However, Black would continue to press strongly on the queenside.



22 ... ♞eb8!

Many players would choose to win a pawn back by 22... ♞xc3 23. ♞xc3 ♞xc3

24. bxc3 ♞xa4 and – with a probable draw! Capablanca's play is characterized by his extraordinary technique; he does not rush to pick unripened fruit; he wants to increase the advantage of his position. There is a little-known principle in chess that states that you should never enter a forcing line if, in a given pawn structure, you can increase the total activity of your pieces to a greater degree than your opponent can.

23. ♞e3 ...

Black threatened 23... ♞xb2, but Nimzowitsch misses the opportunity to release the knight from its defensive duties by 23. ♞d3 ♞c5+ 24. ♞h1 ♞b4 25. ♞e2.

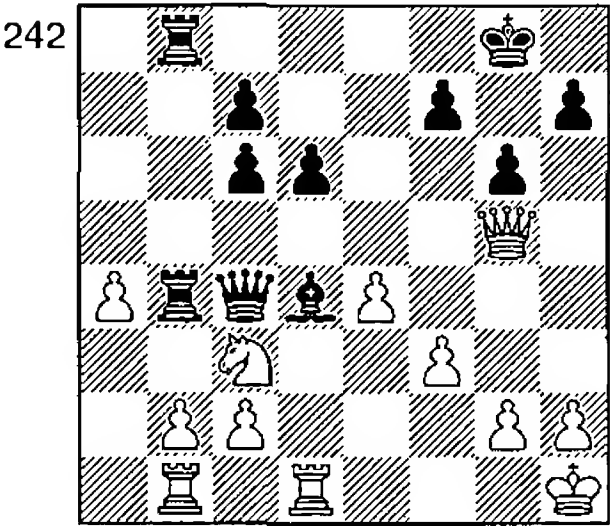
23 ... ♞b4!

Now the pressure of Black's major pieces on the queenside has to lead to a material advantage. Black threatens ... ♞d4, and, if the second rook appears on the b-file, then ... ♞xc3 is threatened, as well as ... ♞xb2, when White's position collapses.

24. ♞g5 ♞d4+

24... ♞ab8 brings about a quicker end.

25. ♞h1 ♞ab8



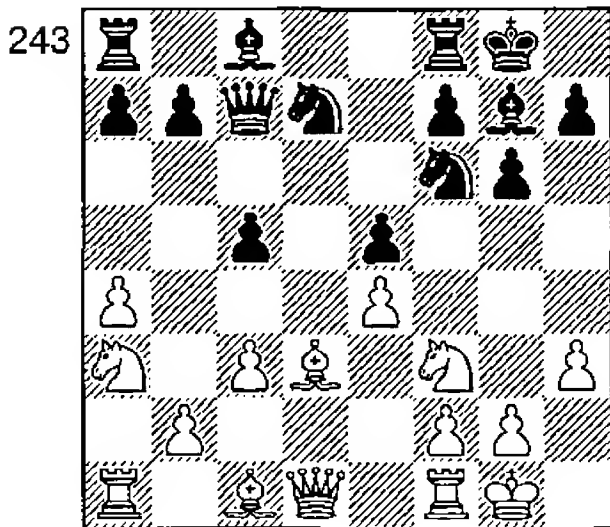
In view of the threat of 26... ♞xc3, large material losses are inevitable for White.

26. ♖xd4 ♗xd4 27. ♔d1 ♖c4 28. h4
 ♖xb2 29. ♗d2 ♖c5 30. ♖e1 ♗h5 31.
 ♖a1 ♗xh4+ 32. ♔g1 ♖b5 33. a5 ♖a8
 34. a6 ♖c5+ 35. ♗h1 ♖c4 36. a7 ♖c5
 37. e5 ♖xe5 38. ♖a4 ♗h5+ 39. ♔g1
 ♖c5+ 40. ♔h2 d5 41. ♖h4 ♖xa7 0-1

A classic Capablanca game! As he said, simple moves are often very complicated, when they are part of an overall plan. Such games are extremely difficult and deep, and it takes an expert player to appreciate their full beauty.

Today the sacrifice of the a-pawn, followed by an attack on the a- and b-files, can be seen across the whole spectrum of openings. In particular it is a mainstay of the Benko Gambit.

No. 77: A Pawn for Activity



Q. Suggest a continuation for Black.

11 ... c4!

White would have had an excellent position after 12. ♗c4. Yet, in the game **Dus-Chotimirsky–Capablanca** (Moscow 1925), Black found a way to activate his pieces through the positional sacrifice of a pawn. In general, a pawn sacrifice for the initiative is different from a combination in that the former pursues posi-

tional aims that accrue more slowly. The pawn is often given up in order to bring an inactive piece into play.

Thus, one must have a clear idea of what one wishes to accomplish. It certainly does not mean that there are obvious weaknesses in the opponent's position. These can be created by concentrating one's forces on a particular area and diverting the opponent's forces by attacking on two fronts. It must be also understood that it is often difficult to establish the correctness of a sacrifice simply by calculating variations. A player's intuition, optimism, and imagination all have their roles to play. The depth of Capablanca's move can be seen from the fact that there is no clear object of attack in White's position. Nevertheless, subsequent play proves him right.

12. ♗xc4 ♗c5

Black could win the pawn back at once with 12... ♗xe4, but he prefers to attack. It is actually with this move that Black offers the pawn sacrifice.

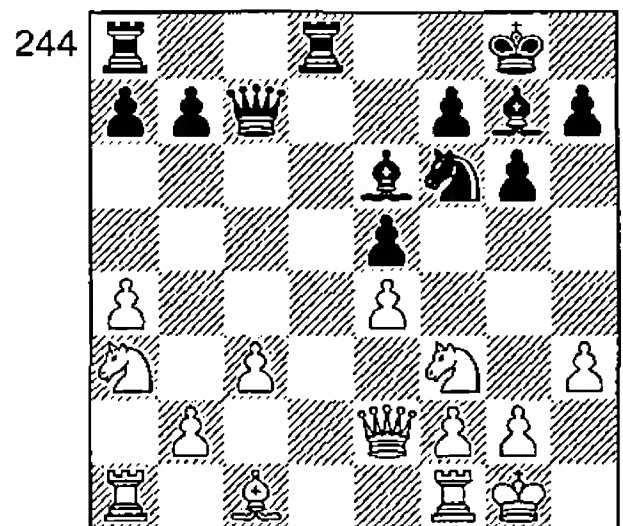
13. ♖e2 ♗xd3

14. ♖xd3 ♖d8

15. ♖e2 ♗e6!

16. ♗a3 ...

The center pawn is so near, yet so far. It cannot be taken because of the variation 16. ♗cxe5 ♗d7 17. ♗xd7 ♗c4.



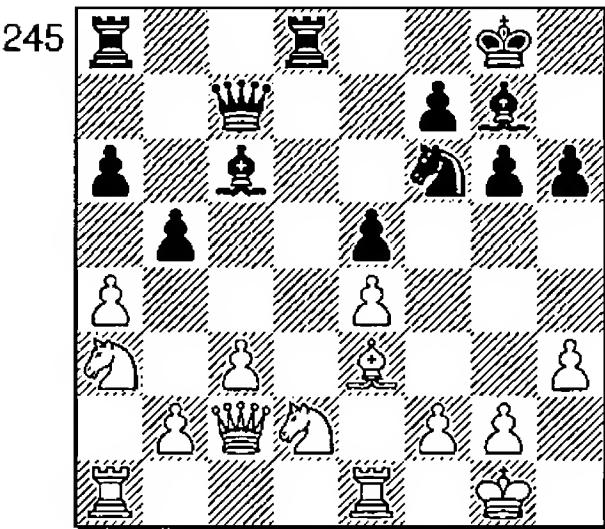
16 ... h6!

A typical Capablanca move. Black doesn't rush, but rather takes the time to build up his position. Moreover, White can hardly benefit in the meantime. For example, after 17. ♖e3 ♜xe4 18. ♞b5 ♚c4!, Black's advantage is clear.

17. ♖fe1 a6
18. ♚c2 ♙d7

Black reroutes the bishop to the a8-h1 diagonal, where it can both attack the e-pawn and support the b-pawn's advance.

19. ♙e3 ♙c6
20. ♞d2 b5



Black begins a “minority attack,” in which a smaller group of pawns attacks a larger pawn formation. As a result, the foundation of White’s queenside is ruined.

21. axb5 ...

At the time, many commentators suggested 21. a5 ♚xa5 22. ♞ac4 ♚c7 23. ♙b6 ♜xd2, when Black is still better. However, seventy years later this variation was boosted by 22. b4 ♚c7 23. f3 followed by ♞b3-a5, when it is quite probable that White could hold out. As we’ve said, years of analysis and minutes at the board are not the same thing!

21... axb5
22. f3 ♞h5

Black directs his knight to the weak square d3 in White’s camp via f6-h5-f4.

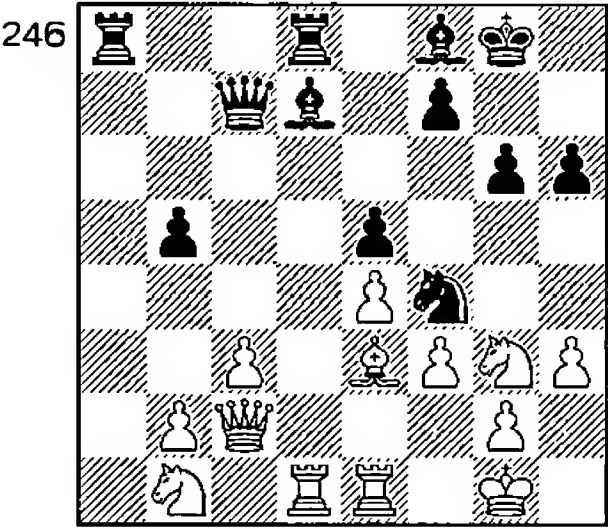
23. ♜ad1 ...

White must vacate the file, as is clear from the variation 23. ♚b3 ♚b7 24. ♞c2 ♙d7 25. ♞b4 ♙e6.

23... ♙f8
24. ♞ab1 ♙d7
25. ♞f1 ...

This move was played to cover d3.

25... ♞f4
26. ♞g3 ...



26 ... b4!

Black continues to press forward with the infantry.

27. ♞e2 g5
28. ♞c1 ♜dc8
29. c4 b3!

A sacrifice to prevent White from connecting his pawns.

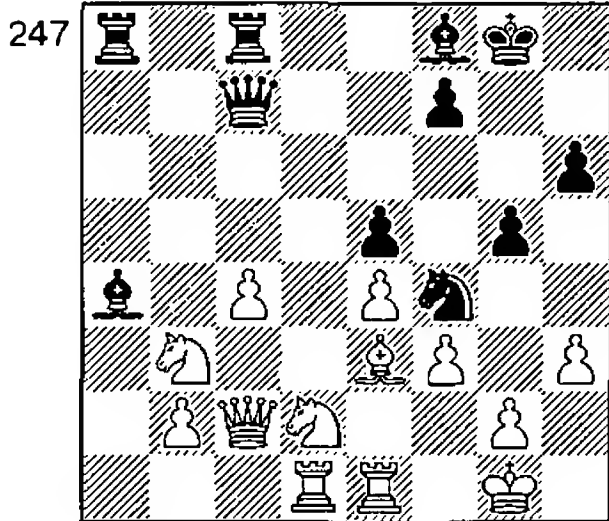
30. ♞xb3 ...

Black has strong pressure after 30. ♚c3 ♜ab8 31. c5 ♞e6 32. ♞d3 f6 33. ♚c4.

30 ... ♙a4
31. ♞ld2 ...

No better is 31. ♙f4 gxf4 32. ♜d3 ♚b6+ 33. ♚h1 ♜ab8 34. ♞ld2 ♚f2 35.

♖f1 ♜e2, when Black's pieces dominate the board.

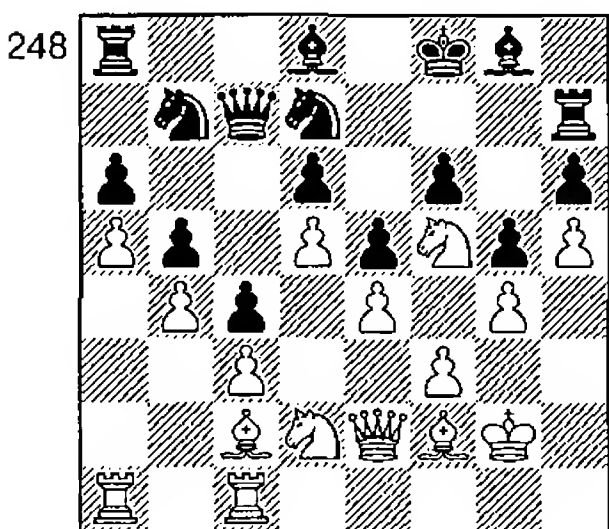


31 ... ♖b4!

The culmination of pins! Further resistance by White is in vain.

32. g3 ♜e6 33. ♜d3 ♖d8 34. ♜e2 ♜ab8 35. ♜f1 ♜xd2 36. ♜xd2 ♜xd1 37. ♜xd1 ♜xb2 38. ♜c1 ♜a2 39. ♜f2 ♜d3 40. ♜f1 ♜aa3 41. f4 ♜ac3 42. ♜e1 exf4 43. gxf4 ♜xf4 44. ♜xf4 gxf4 45. ♜e2 f3 46. ♜a2 ♜c1 47. ♜xf3 ♜xf3 48. ♜g2 ♜g3 0-1

No. 78: Play in Blocked Positions

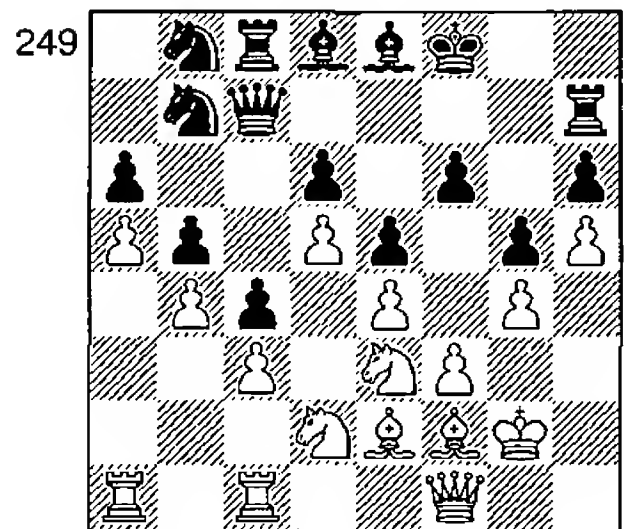


Q. The pawns block the entire board. So, is it time to agree to a draw?

To understand the nature of a position, it is necessary to be able to evalu-

ate it accurately. The position may be blocked in the game **Bronstein—Win-iwarter** (Krems 1967); however, if we look deeper, it's not difficult to discover that White is better. Black's army is crowded onto the last two ranks, White has more space, and White controls a number of important squares in Black's camp: b6, c6, e6, and g6. In such cases, a sacrifice can decide the issue. Here the c4 square is best suited for this purpose. White's further play is directed towards this goal.

32. ♜f1!	♜f7
33. ♜d1	♜e8
34. ♜e2	♜c8
35. ♜e3	♜b8



36. ♜dxc4! ...

Count the number of pieces defending this pawn and how many squares, how many files, and how many diagonals are inaccessible to these pieces. It is likely that you will then avoid playing positions where your opponent's pawns occupy more than half the board and control so many important squares.

36...	bxc4
37. ♜xc4	♜b5

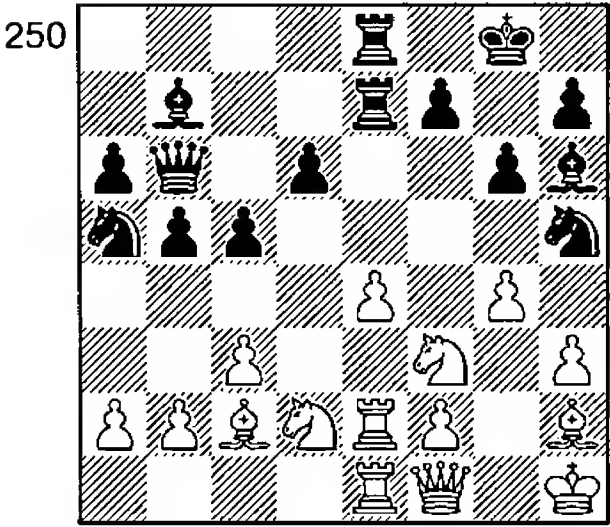
Black tries to defend the a-pawn, but to no avail.

38. ♖b6 ♗xe2
39. ♔xe2 ♗e7
40. ♖xc8 ♔xc8
41. ♗a7 ♖d7
42. ♔xa6 1-0

The last tooth is pulled. Now there are no obstacles to stop the pawn phalanx from moving forward. Therefore, Black resigned.

Bronstein recounted that a year later he observed with amazement how Kavalek confidently realized a similar plan against Lengyel during a tournament in Amsterdam. He asked Kavalek why he had played so fast, and Kavalek explained that some months ago Hort had shown him Bronstein's game against Winiwarter. Bronstein joked, "That is why the younger generation always proves to be smarter than the previous one!"

No. 79: A Small Investment
Yielding Great Dividends



Q. How would you react to White's last move, 21. g4 ?

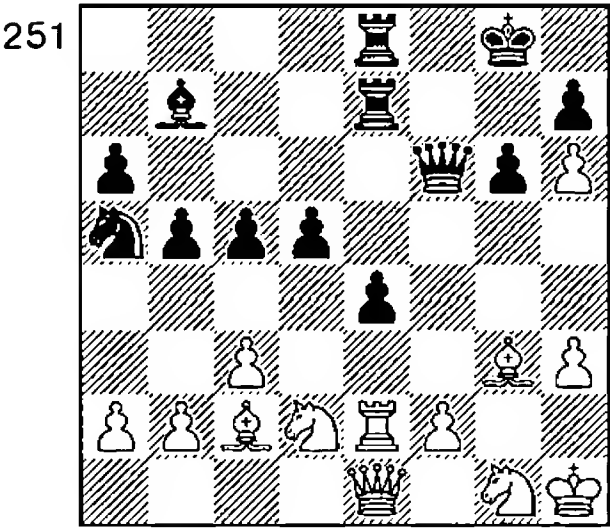
White's move invites Black to either exchange his important dark-squared bishop by 21...♗xd2 22. ♖xd2 ♖g7,

or to sacrifice material. In the game **A.Fink—Reshevsky** (U.S. Championship 1946), Black had prepared a vigorous strategic refutation of the pawn attack.

21 ... ♗f4!
22. g5 ♖xe2
23. gxh6 f5!

This is Black's point. He receives a magnificent center as compensation for the small material investment.

24. ♔xe2 fxg4
25. ♔e1 d5
26. ♖g1 ♗f6
27. ♗g3 ...



27 ... g5!

White is doomed to passivity, while Black can improve his position at will. He does this before setting the pawns in motion.

28. ♖h2 ♗xh6

Black has only two pawns for the sacrificed piece, but his center pawns are very impressive and they threaten to advance.

29. f3 ...

This move only invites a crisis. It cannot damage the pawn phalanx.

29 ... e3
30. ♖b3 ♖xb3
31. axb3 d4!
32. b4 g4

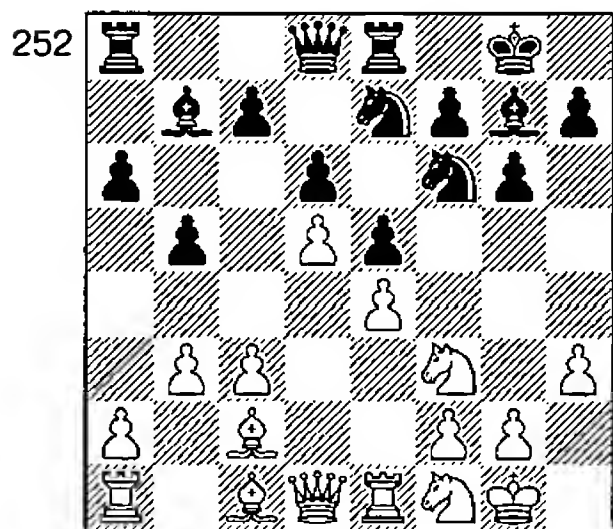
With this advance, Black forces the opening of the h1-a8 diagonal.

33. ♖e4 ♗xe4
34. fxe4 ♗xe4
35. cxd4 cxd4

Subsequent events in this game are clear enough and require no comment.

36. ♔d1 ♗e6 37. hxc4 ♗xc4 38. ♖g2 ♖e7 39. ♗e2 ♖eg7 40. ♗b1 h5 41. ♖g1 h4 42. ♗f4 ♗xg1 43. ♗xg1 ♗g4 44. ♗a2+ ♗h8 0-1

No. 80: Sacrifice for Harmony



Q. How strong is White's pawn center?

15 ... ♗xe4!?

In the game Geller–Eingorn (USSR Championship 1985), Black does not wait for White to fortify his pawn center by c3-c4. Instead he chooses to liquidate it by sacrificing a piece for two pawns. Black's goal is to have his remaining forces work harmoniously around the pawn duo.

16. ♗xe4 f5
17. ♗c2 e4
18. ♗d4 ♗xd5

For the piece, Black has two pawns and an active position. Is it enough?

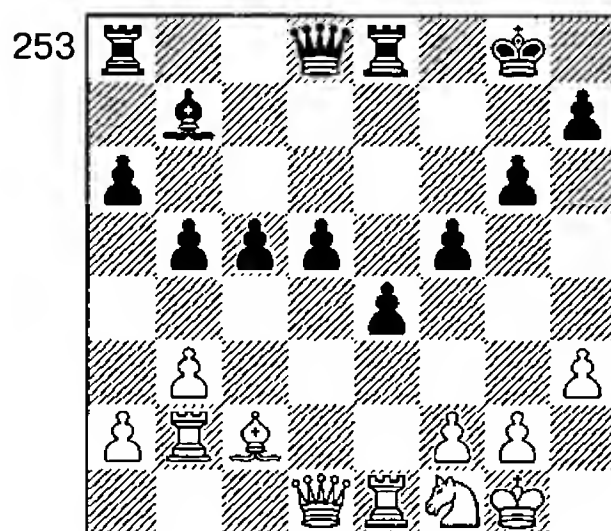
19. ♗e2 ...

White voluntarily gives away one more pawn. After 19. ♗d2 c5 20. ♗e2 his pieces would be flexibly placed; for example, 20...b4 21. c4, or 20...♗b6 21. b4. It is likely that White intended to further sacrifice the exchange. But Black is not required to accept it!

19... ♗xc3
20. ♗xc3 ♗xc3
21. ♖b1 c5
22. ♗b2 ♗xb2!

Otherwise White's unopposed dark-squared bishop may provide saving chances. Now Black's pawn mass will decide the game.

23. ♖xb2 d5

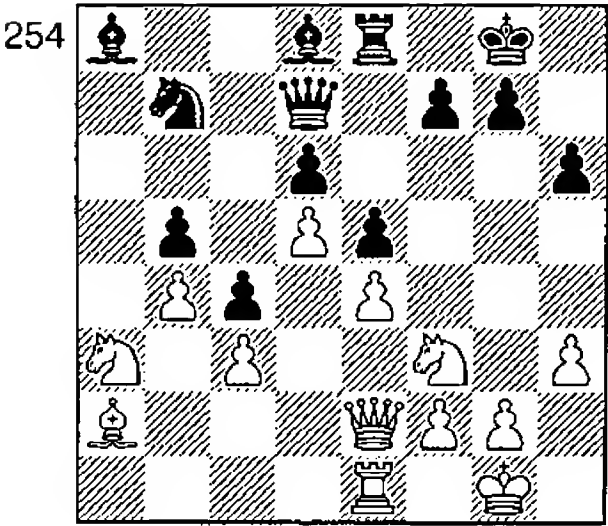


24. ♗c1 ...

24. b4 does not help due to 24...♗f6! followed by 25...c4 and 26...d4. The rest of the game is clear.

24...d4 25. ♗d1 ♗d6 26. ♖c2 ♖ac8
27. ♗g5 ♗e5 28. h4 f4 29. ♗g4 ♗xg5
30. hxc4 ♖c7 31. ♖d1 d3 32. ♖c3
♖e5 33. f3 e3 34. ♖cxd3 e2 35. ♖e1
exf1 ♗+ 36. ♗xf1 ♖xg5 37. ♗f2 ♗g7
38. ♖d7+ ♖dx7 39. ♗xd7 ♗f7 40.
a4 ♗d5 41. ♗c8 ♗xb3 42. a5 c4 43.
♗xa6 c3 44. ♗b7 b4 45. ♖a1 ♗d5 46.
♗xd5+ 0-1

No. 81: Sacrificing One Piece to Free Up Another One



Q. How can White bring his light-squared bishop into play?

White has a space advantage in the game **Vasiukov–Malevinsky** (Beltsy 1979), but the board is partitioned by the pawn chain and this restricts the bishops. Therefore White embarks on a positional piece sacrifice that forces Black to undertake a laborious defense.

21. ♖xb5! ♜xb5
22. ♗xc4 ...

Skill in chess is nothing less than the ability to make the most of one's potential activity. White has sacrificed a piece, but his remaining forces are better coordinated than Black's.

- 22 ... ♜b6
23. ♗b5 ♜f8
24. ♖a1 ♗e7
25. ♖a6 ♜c7
26. ♗c6 ...

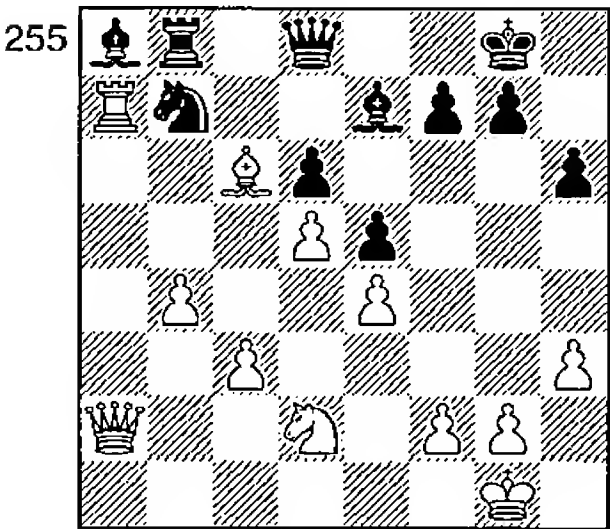
This is the situation that White foresaw when he played 21. ♖xb5. He controls the a-file and hopes to take advantage of the tragicomic arrangement of the black pieces.

- 26 ... ♜b8

27. ♜a7 ...

The continuation 27. ♗d2 was more accurate, but White will get to it later. After 27... ♜c8 28. ♗c4 ♗d8, White has a wide choice of attacking plans; for example, 29. ♜g4 and moving the king over to the queenside. Yet a clear win is not apparent.

- 27... ♜b6
28. ♜a2 ♜d8
29. ♗d2 ...



- 29 ... ♜h7?

Black could offer more resistance by 29... ♜c8! 30. ♗c4 ♗d8, when White would have to work hard for the point.

30. ♗c4 ♗g5
31. ♜e2 ...

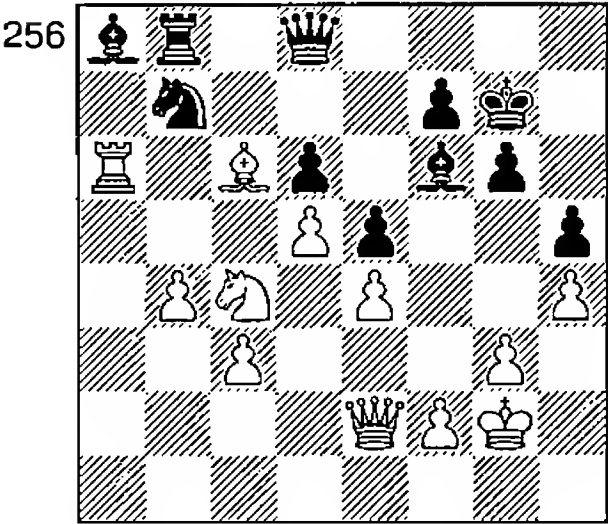
The queen stood well on a2. Therefore, 31. ♜a6, threatening 32. ♗b6, was necessary.

- 31 ... g6
32. g3 ♜g7
33. h4 ♗f6
34. ♜g2 ...

34. h5 deserved attention. The tragedy of chess is that only one move can be played on each turn, and this move has to be based on a concrete plan. It is quite common for one side to fall into time

trouble trying to decide how to proceed in a particular position.

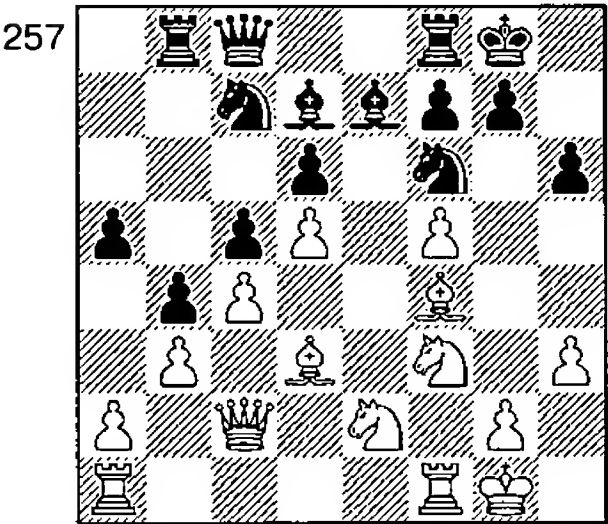
34 ... h5
35. ♖a6 ...



The diagram position demonstrates the triumph of White's strategy. The opponent has no good way to defend against the threat of 36. ♗b6. Even Black's desperate counterattack cannot change the outcome. White won deservedly.

35...g5 36. hxc5 ♗xc5 37. ♖xh5 ♗f6 38. ♖g4 ♖h8 39. ♗e3 ♖d8 40. ♗f5+ ♗f8 41. ♖b6 ♗d2 42. ♗xb7 1-0

No. 82: The Role of Space



Q. Suggest a plan for White, and support your conclusion with variations.

White has a huge advantage in space, but what does this mean? For the answer, it is necessary to discuss the role of pawns in chess. The pawn is the weakest fighting unit, but (although this may sound paradoxical) its weakness carries considerable force. Let me explain further.

When a piece is threatened with capture by a pawn, that piece – because it is more valuable – is almost always compelled to retreat. That is why a square that a pawn controls is practically inaccessible to enemy pieces. The most important consequence of this is that the further the pawns are advanced, the less space there is for the enemy pieces, which limits their potential. This confers a space advantage to the player who advanced his pawns. The extra space makes it easier for the player with this type of advantage to regroup his forces on either flank for an attack.

Needless to say, when grabbing space a player should be careful not to create weaknesses that can be exploited by the opponent. The pawns need to be supported by the pieces in order for a space advantage to become a decisive positional factor. Gaining space is not an end in itself; very many factors depend on the harmonious cooperation of the forces.

We can find a number of classical examples of the use of a space advantage in the games of the German grandmaster and theorist Siegbert Tarrasch. One of these is the diagram position from the game **Tarrasch–Marco** (Vienna 1898). White controls almost the whole board, while the black pieces are cowering on the last two ranks. Thus, Black's pieces lack coordination. Moreover, Black has

no way to create counterplay; for instance, he might attack on the queen-side, but his forces cannot be quickly deployed there. This factor allows White to regroup his forces methodically for a decisive attack on the enemy king.

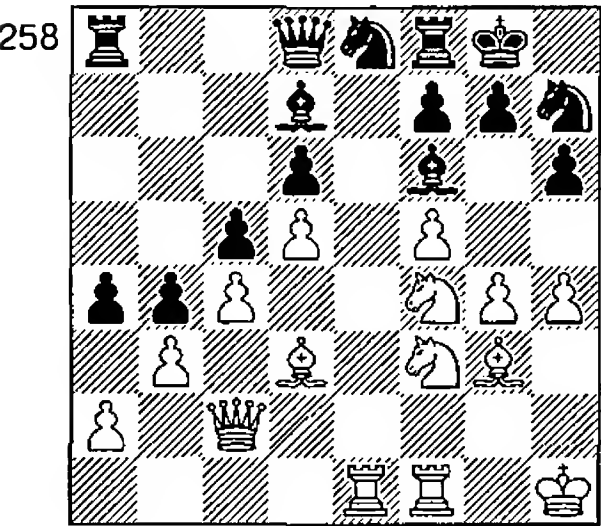
20. g4! ♘h7
21. h4! ...

A multi-dimensional move. On one hand, White prepares the g4-g5 break; on the other, he keeps the enemy forces away from g5.

21 ... ♔d8
22. ♖g3 a4
23. ♕h1 ♖a8
24. ♖ae1! ...

Pay attention to this typical move. It is well known that exchanges benefit the defender, so White takes measures to keep the rooks on the board.

24 ... ♘e8
25. ♘f4 ♙f6



26. ♘e6! ...

Given the disposition of the forces, it is no wonder that White can strike a decisive blow. Steinitz taught that the player with an advantage is obligated to attack, lest he lose the initiative.

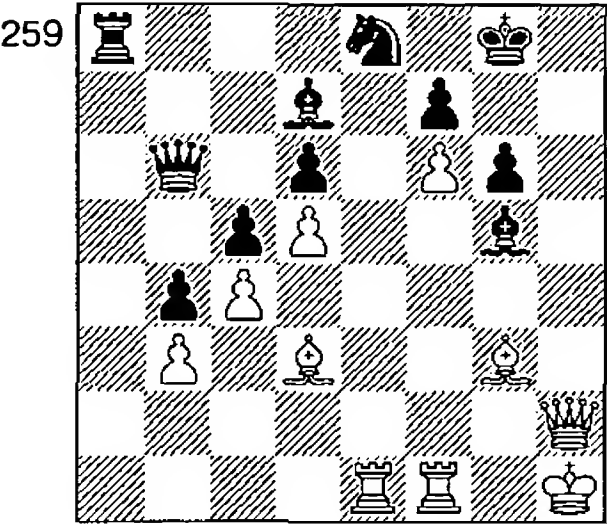
26 ... axb3
27. axb3 ♔b6

Accepting the sacrifice by 27...fxe6 28. fxe6 is absolutely hopeless, as the h7-knight is trapped.

28. ♘xf8 ♔xf8
29. g5! ...

White opens files for his pieces to rush in on. Black could resign already.

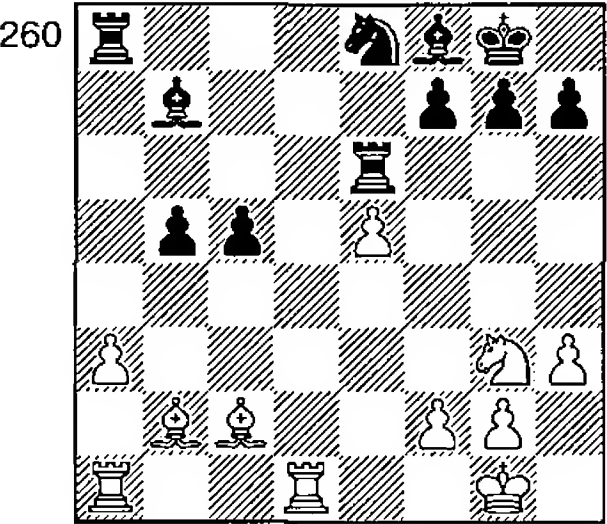
29...hxg5 30. hxg5 ♘xg5 31. ♕h2 ♔g8 32. ♘xg5 ♙xg5 33. f6 g6:



34. ♖xg6! 1-0

This final tactical shot crowns a strategically accurate game. Black resigned.

No. 83: Breaking Up the Pawns



Q. Are the black pawns on the queen-side an asset, or a liability?

At first it seems like Black has overcome all difficulties in the game Vasi-

ukov—Averbakh (Moscow Championship 1964). However, White possesses some notable positional plusses: a space advantage, a more active dark-squared bishop, and the possibility of weakening Black's queenside pawns.

25. a4! bxa4

The hasty 25...b4 would deprive Black's connected passed pawns of any value, since after 26. ♖b3 they could no longer advance.

26. ♖xa4 ♖xa4

27. ♙xa4 ♘c7

28. ♖d7 ♙c6

29. ♙xc6 ♖xc6

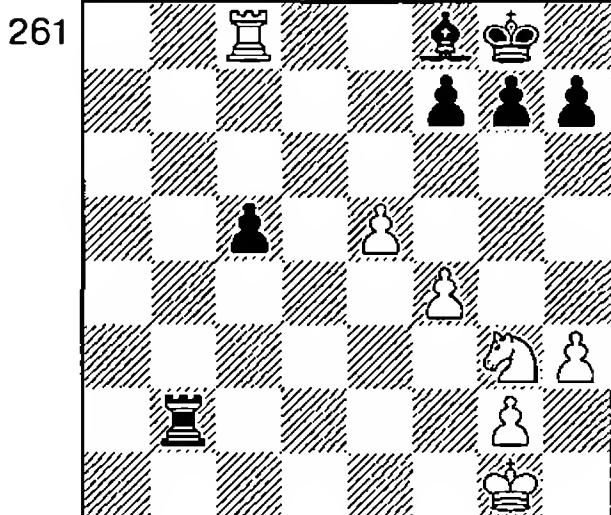
30. f4 ...

Despite the piece trades, White's initiative increases. This is mainly because Black's remaining pieces are passive. The dark-squared bishop is especially bad. Vasiukov does not avoid further simplification, and gradually increases his advantage.

30 ... ♖b6

31. ♖xc7 ♖xb2

32. ♖c8 ...



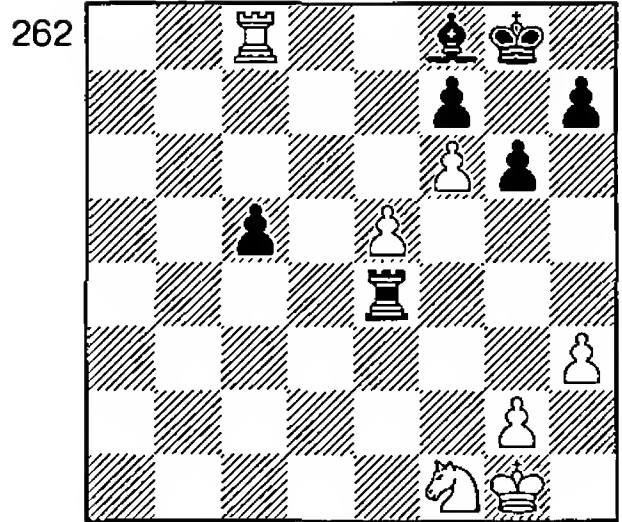
The position has been simplified further, but Black's position has only gotten worse. The move 32...g6 does not keep the balance, as the weakness at f6 would be fatal.

32 ... ♖b4

33. f5 g6

34. f6 ♖f4

35. ♘f1 ♖e4

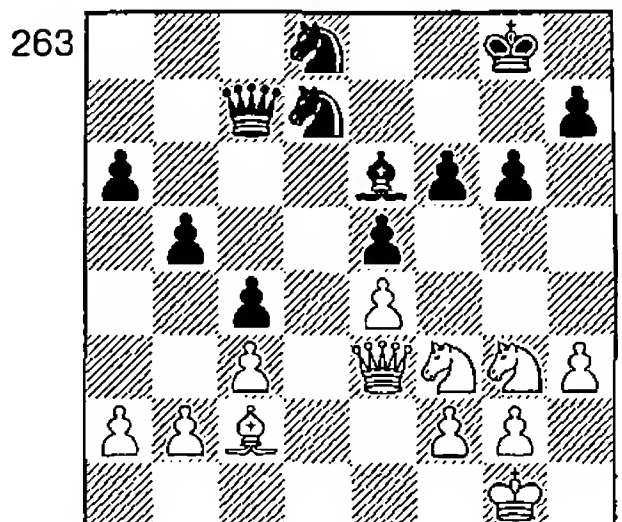


Averbakh tries to erect a fortress by forcing White to defend the e5-pawn. But in a situation like this, White can be generous since he only needs to save the f6-pawn. Once the white knight occupies d7, the outcome will be determined.

36. ♘h2 ♖xe5 37. ♘g4 ♖h5 38. ♖e8 ♖h4 39. g3 ♖xh3 40. ♙e5 ♖xg3+ 41. ♙f2 ♖g5 42. ♘d7 ♖f5+ 43. ♙e3 h5 44. ♖xf8+ ♙h7 45. ♖xf7+ ♙h6 46. ♖e7 1-0

Further resistance is pointless.

No. 84: Utilizing a Space Advantage



Q. Show how to use Black's space advantage.

In **Ravinsky–Karpov** (Leningrad 1966), Black's advantage in space is evident from the fact that the black c-pawn has crossed into enemy territory and considerably hinders the enemy pieces. Another factor in Black's favor is that the white knight on g3 is poorly placed, and most importantly White lacks attacking prospects.

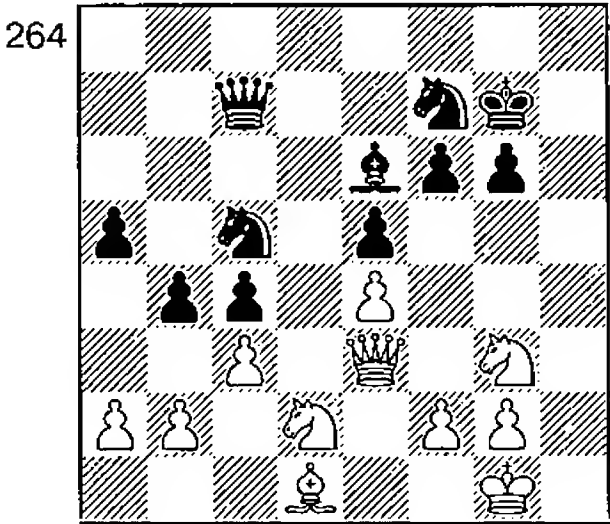
25 ... a5!

With this move Black begins to exploit his space advantage. He plans to create weaknesses in the opponent's camp by advancing the a- and b-pawns, then his attack should follow.

26. h4 ...

The attempt at counterplay on the kingside is doomed to failure in view of the uncoordinated white forces. In case of 26. a3, there could follow 26... ♖c5 27. ♖d2 ♘b7 28. ♙f1 ♘b8 with ... ♙b8-c6 and ... b5-b4.

26 ... b4
27. h5 ♙g7
28. ♙d1 ♙f7
29. hxg6 hxg6
30. ♙d2 ♙c5



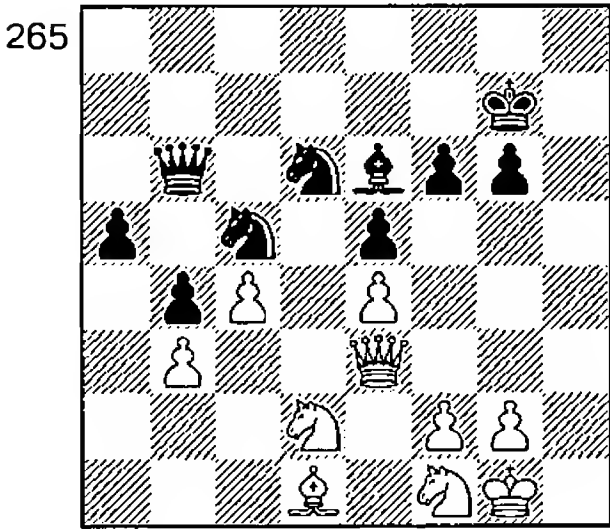
31. b3 ...

This sharp move provokes a crisis, but White could no longer sit back and wait. Black is already threatening to place the knight on d3, and in case of 31. ♙c2, Black himself could play 31...b3.

31 ... cxb3
32. axb3 ♙b6

Now that an object for attack has been created, Black begins to pressure it.

33. ♙gf1 ♙d6
34. c4 ...



White is compelled to make this move, as 34. cxb4 is met by 34... ♙xb4 with a big plus for Black.

34 ... ♙c6
35. ♙c2 a4
36. bxa4 ♙xc4

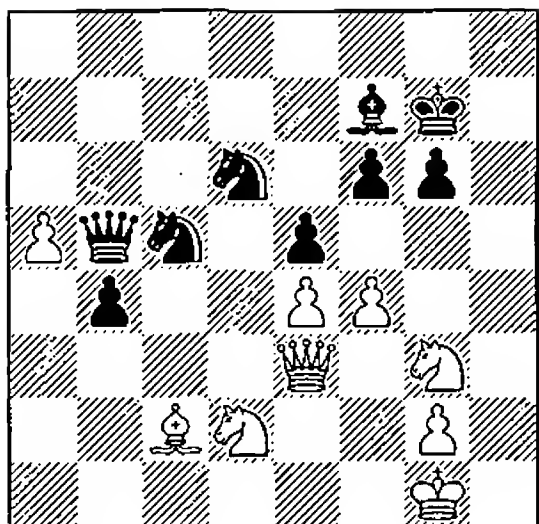
It may seem surprising that Black can part with his bishop, but White cannot take advantage of it. 37. ♙xc4 loses to 37... ♙xc4 38. ♖e1 ♙b6 39. ♙d2 ♙b2 40. ♙b3 ♙bxa4.

37. ♙g3 ♙f7
38. a5 ♙b5
39. f4 ...

(See Diagram 266)

Understanding that all is lost, White takes the last chance to seek activity. But it comes too late, as his earlier play was too passive.

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39... ♖xa5

40. fxe5 ♖a1+

41. ♔f2 ♖xe5

42. ♜f3 ...

Karpov's next move puts the final nail in the coffin.

42 ... ♖b2!

43. ♖xc5 b3

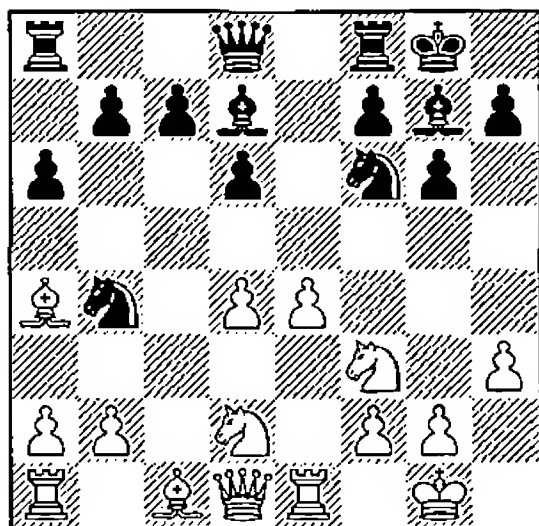
44. ♜d4 bxc2

0-1

White resigned: he drops a piece after 45. ♖xc2 ♖xd4 or 45. ♜xc2 ♜c4.

No. 85: Take the High Ground

267



Q. How should White answer Black's 11... ♜c6-b4?

12. e5! ...

In the game **Romanishin–Klovans** (Jūrmala 1983), White seizes territory in the center.

12... ♜fd5

Trading light-squared bishops by 12... ♜xa4 13. ♖xa4 may ease Black's predicament, though White's chances are still preferable. For example, 13... ♜fd5 14. ♖b3 dxe5 15. dxe5 ♜c6 16. ♜e4 (not 16. ♖xb7? ♜a5) 16... ♜xe5 17. ♜xe5 ♜xe5 18. ♜h6 ♜e8 19. ♜ad1 c6 20. ♖xb7.

13. ♜b3 ♜f4

14. ♜e4 ♜bd3

15. ♜xf4 ♜xf4

16. ♖d2 dxe5

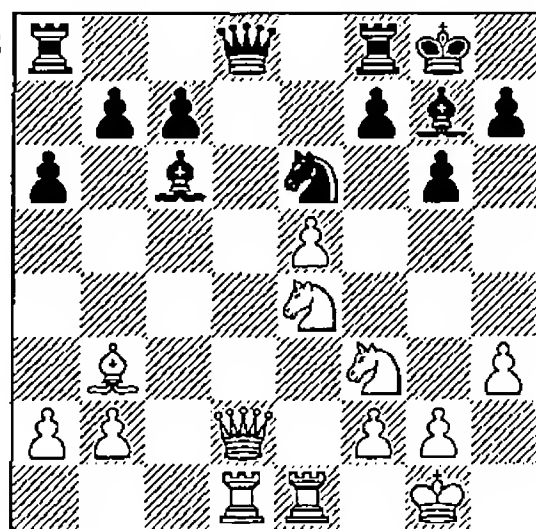
17. dxe5 ♜e6

18. ♜ad1 ...

White's strategy has succeeded. He has an advantage in development and space. All his pieces occupy excellent centralized positions.

18 ... ♜c6

268



19. ♜f6+! ...

Having accrued a positional advantage, White undertakes concrete action.

19... ♜xf6

19... ♜h8 20. ♖b4 a5 21. ♖a3 ♖c8 22. ♜xe6 ♖xe6 23. ♜g5 ♖f5 24. ♜gxh7 would not have helped Black.

20. ♖c3 ♖e7

Black loses after 20...♙xe5 21. ♘xe5 ♙e7 22. ♘xf7. More resistance was offered by 20...♙g7 21. ♖xd8, when White would have faced serious technical difficulties in converting his advantage.

21. exf6 ♙c5
22. ♘e5 ...

White transitions to a vastly superior ending.

- 22 ... ♙xc3
23. bxc3 ♙e8

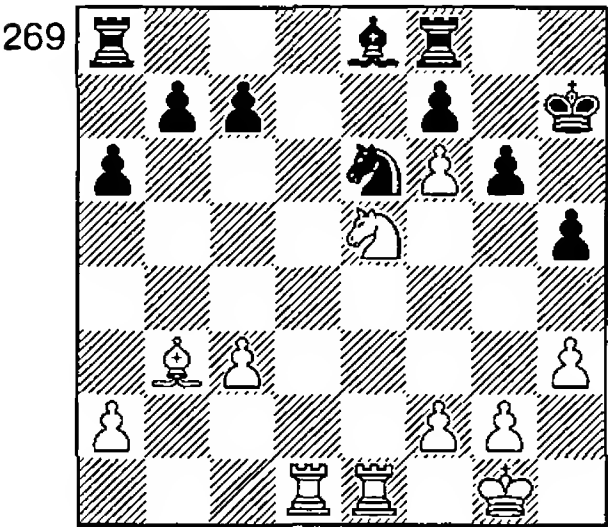
Forced, as White threatened 24. ♘xf7.

24. ♘g4! ...

Romanishin creates a new weakness in Black's pawn chain. Now 24. ♙xe6 is threatened.

- 24 ... h5
25. ♘e5 ♙h7

We can see White's initiative develop as he creates threats with every move and keeps Black on his toes.

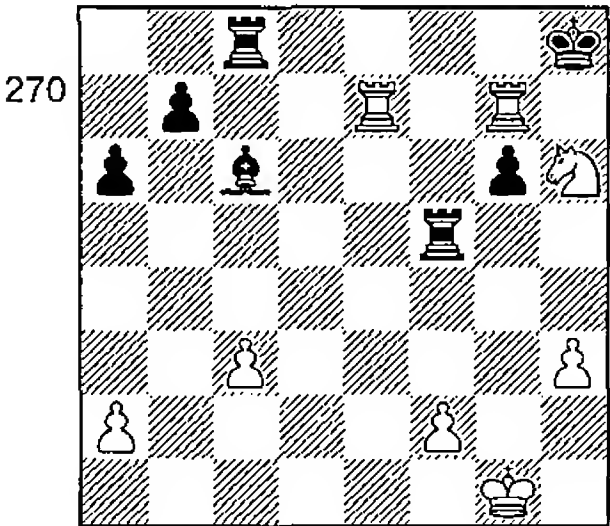


26. ♘d7! ♖h8

Black is not happy to make this move, but exchanging on d7 leads to disaster on the seventh rank. However, now White gets both a positional and a material advantage.

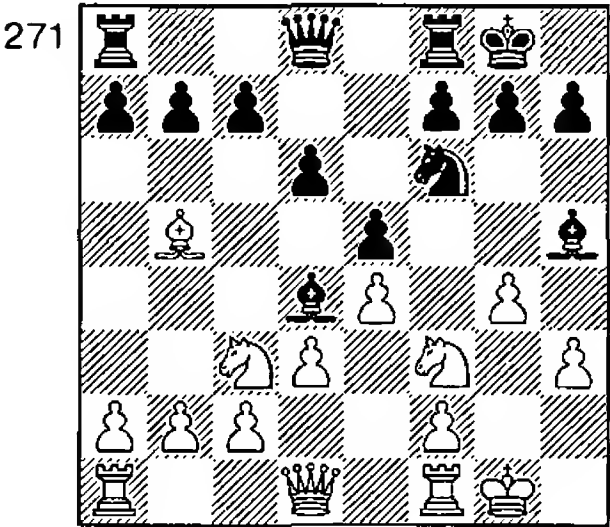
27. ♙xe6 fxe6 28. ♖xe6 ♙h6 29. ♘e5 ♖f8 30. g4 hxg4 31. ♘xg4+ ♙h7 32.

- ♖e7+ ♙h8 33. ♖xc7 ♙c6 34. ♖e1 ♖ac8 35. ♖g7 ♖xf6 36. ♖ee7 ♖f5 37. ♘h6 1-0



Black resigned, as checkmate is inevitable.

No. 86: A Fatal Weakening



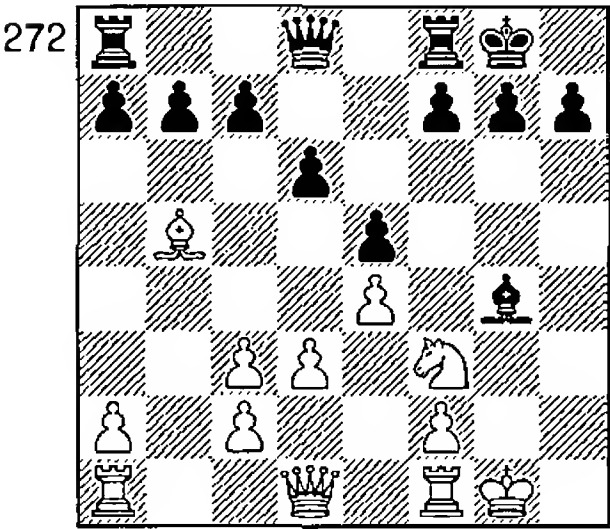
A. The preceding moves, leading to the diagram position, were 10. h3 ♙h5 11. g4. Do the pawn advances a) imprison Black's light-squared bishop, or b) weaken the position of White's king?

B. Suggest a continuation for Black.

In the game Salwe–Chigorin (Russian Championship 1903), Black's pin on the f3-knight reduces White's active possibilities; however, White should

only play h2-h3 after Black moves the knight from f6, say, with the intention of going to f4 and subsequently opening the f-file. The careless advance of the h- and g-pawns puts White on the brink of catastrophe. Given that White's pieces are poorly coordinated and that Black's position in the center is stable, it is not surprising that Black has a combi-national blow.

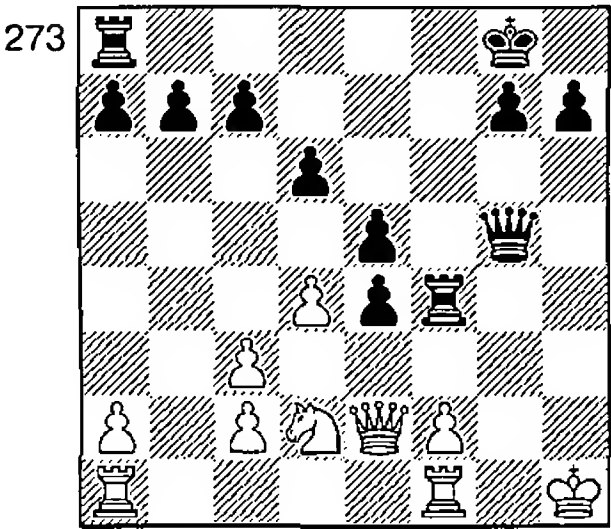
11 ... ♗xc3!
First, Black eliminates a potential defender of the kingside.
12. bxc3 ♜xg4!
13. hxg4 ...
No better is 13. ♞xe5 ♞f6 14. ♞g4 (14. ♞f3 c6 15. ♜c4 d5) 14...♞xg4 15. hxg4 ♞g5 16. f3 ♞b5.
13 ... ♗xg4



Black's knight sacrifice has deprived the white crown of its infantry guard, while the pin of the f3-knight persists and its consequences are now even more unpleasant. Black's other pieces will soon enter the fray and the knight cannot easily be defended.
14. d4 ...
White prepares to return the bishop to the kingside.
14... f5

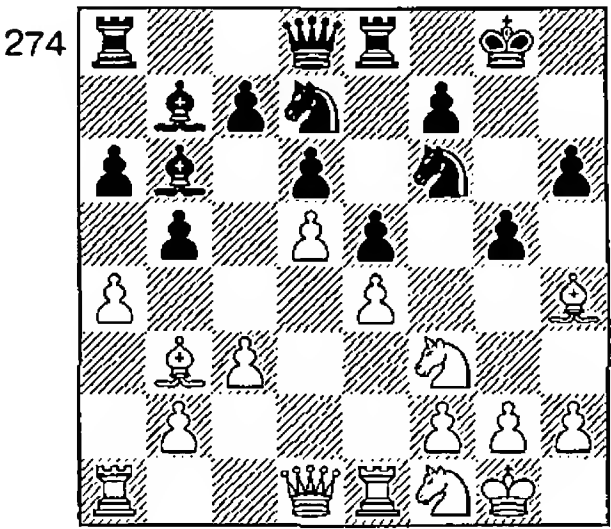
A new wave of the attack rolls out; opening files on the kingside is the quickest way.

15. ♜e2 ...
15. exf5 e4, or 15. dxe5 fxe4 16. ♞d5+ ♜h8 17. ♞h2 ♞g5 18. ♜h1 ♜f3+ 19. ♞xf3 exf3, are no help.
15 ... fxe4
16. ♞d2 ...
Of course, 16. ♞h2 is no better. In this case Black wins with 16...♜h3 17. ♜h1 (17. ♞d2 ♞f4) 17...♜xf1 18. ♞xf1 ♞h4, etc.
16 ... ♜xe2
17. ♞xe2 ♞g5+
18. ♜h1 ♞f4



White resigned, as there is no way to defend h4.

No. 87: Insufficient Force

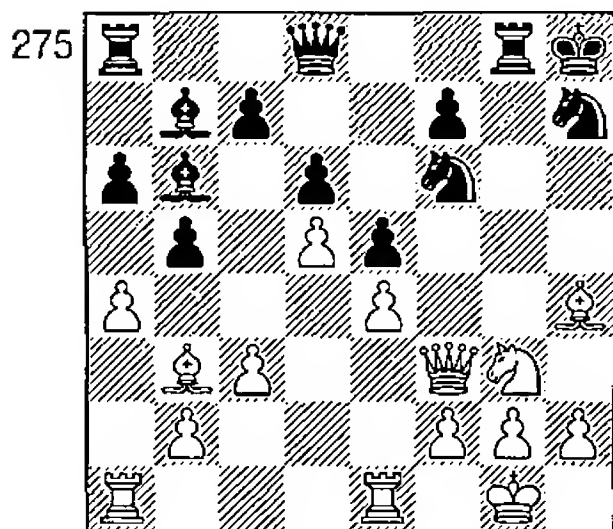


Q. Does 16. ♖xg5 a) lead to a decisive attack on the black king; or b) lose?

16. ♖xg5? ...

Such sacrifices can succeed only when there are superior forces on the king-side. If we compare this position from **Vasiukov–Zheliandinov** (Leningrad 1977) to **Salwe–Chigorin**, we see that the conditions for the sacrifice are not so favorable here. However, Black must still be careful and defend accurately. Instead an interesting fight was offered by 16. ♗g3, when White's chances would not be worse.

16...	hxg5
17. ♗xg5	♗f8
18. ♖f3	♗8h7
19. ♗h4	♔h8
20. ♖g3	♖g8



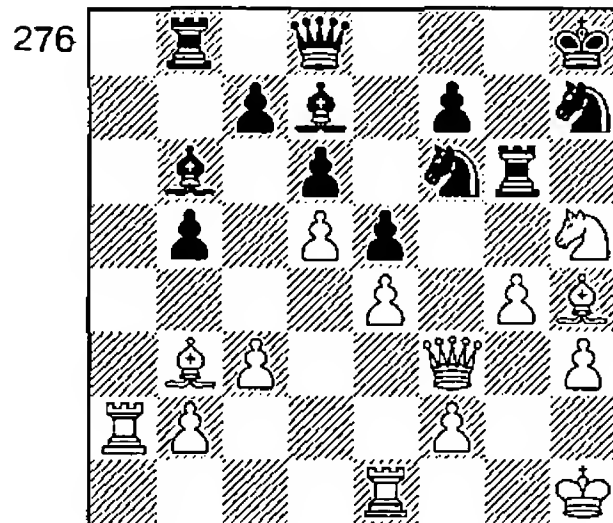
21. ♗h5	♖g6
22. ♖h1	♖b8
23. h3	♗c8
24. axb5	axb5
25. g4	...

This advance weakens White's king-side and facilitates Black's counterplay.

25 ...	♗d7
26. ♖a2	...

So far Black has been reacting to White's threats, but now White's attack

is at a standstill. Black takes over the initiative by proving that the pin on the knight is a mirage.



26 ... ♗xh5!

An excellent tactical shot! White is forced to take the queen as 27. gxh5 loses to 27... ♖xh4 28. hxg6 fxg6. The epitome of a successful defense is a counterattack that repels the enemy forces.

27. ♗xd8 ♗f4!

Black has only two pieces for the queen so far.

28. ♗xc7 ...

The attempt to rescue the clergyman by 28. ♗h4 leads to an irresistible attack after 28... ♖h6, and if 29. ♗g3, then 29... ♖xh3+ 30. ♖gl ♖g5 31. ♖dl ♖xg3+. Or 29. ♖g3 ♖g6, winning a third piece for the queen.

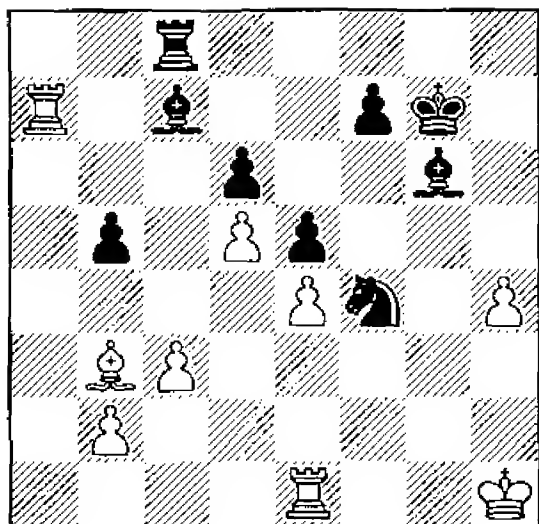
28...	♗xc7
29. ♖a7	♖c8
30. ♖g3	♖g7
31. f3	♖g5
32. h4	♗xf3
33. ♖xf3	♗xg4
34. ♖g3	...

On 34. ♖e3 or 34. ♖f2, there follows 34... ♗b6 35. ♖xb6 ♗f3+ 36. ♖h2 ♖g2+ 37. ♖h1 ♖xb2+; while on 34. ♖fl the move 34... ♖h8 suffices.

34... ♗h5

35. ♖xg6+ ♗xg6

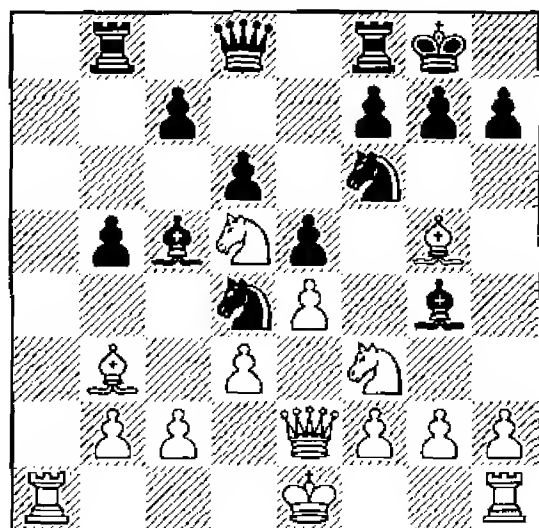
277



36. ♗c2 ♗d8 37. ♖eal ♗xh4 38. ♖a8 ♖c4 39. ♗h2 ♗xe4 40. b3 ♗xc2 41. bxc4 bxc4 42. ♖8a6 0-1

No. 88: An Unpinning Sacrifice

278



Q. How should White continue?

13. ♗xd4! ...

In the game **Grabek–Filip** (corr. 1970), White cuts the Gordian knot.

13... ♗xe2

14. ♗xf6 ♗d7

After 14...gxf6 15. ♗c6 White wins back the bishop.

15. ♗f5 ♖fe8

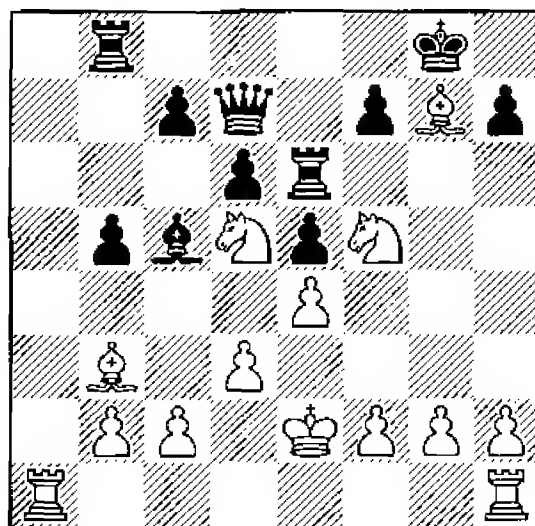
16. ♗de7+ with 17. ♗xg7# was threatened.

16. ♗xg7 ♖e6

17. ♗xe2 ...

White has three minor pieces for the queen and a terrific initiative – enough to win.

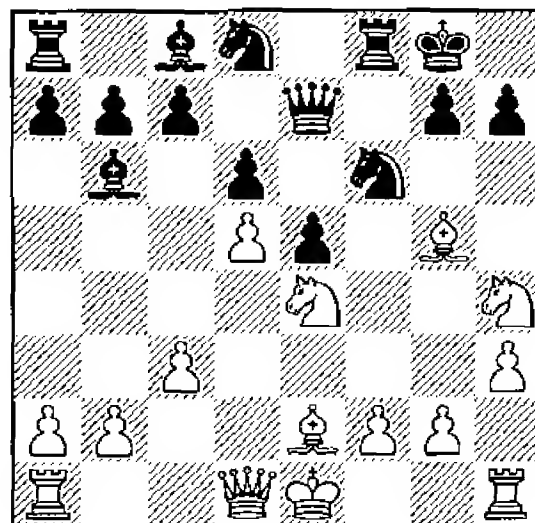
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17... ♗d8 18. ♗h6 c6 19. ♗de3 d5 20. ♖a6 ♖g6 21. h3 ♗c8 22. ♖ha1 ♗h8 23. g4 ♗xe3 24. ♗xe3 c5 25. ♖xg6 hxg6 26. ♗e7 ♗b7 27. ♗d5 ♖c8 28. c3 f5 29. gxf5 gxf5 30. ♗g5 c4 31. ♗c2 fxe4 32. ♗f6+ ♗h7 33. dxc4 1-0

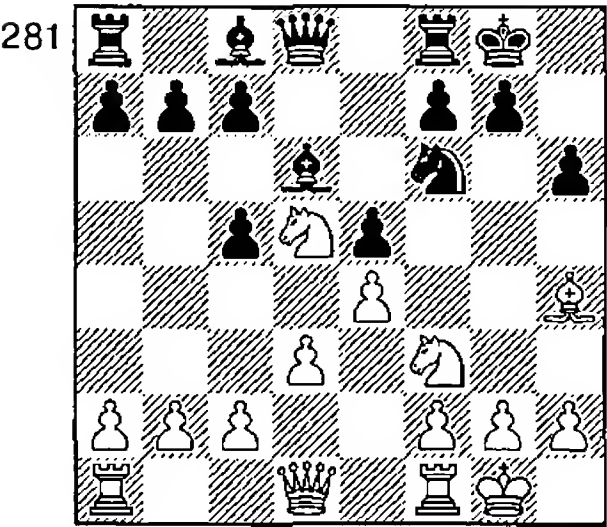
To complete our discussion of this unpinning motif, let's look at the finish of the game **Horwitz–Bledow** (Berlin 1837):

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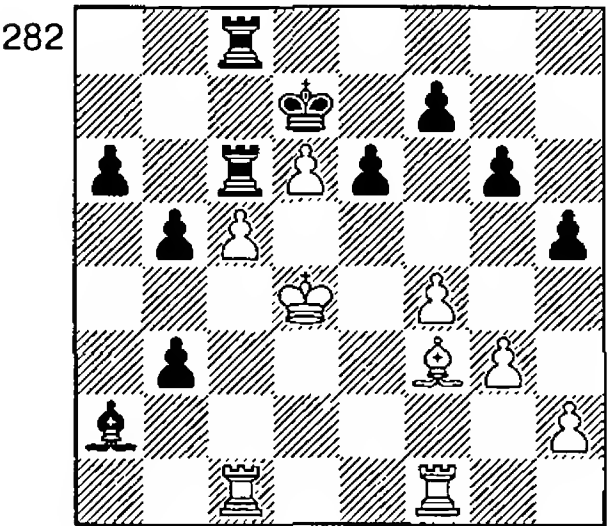
Black played the striking 12... ♗xe4! and White resigned after 13. ♗xe7 ♗xf2+ as mate will follow in short order.

No. 89: The Imprisoned Piece

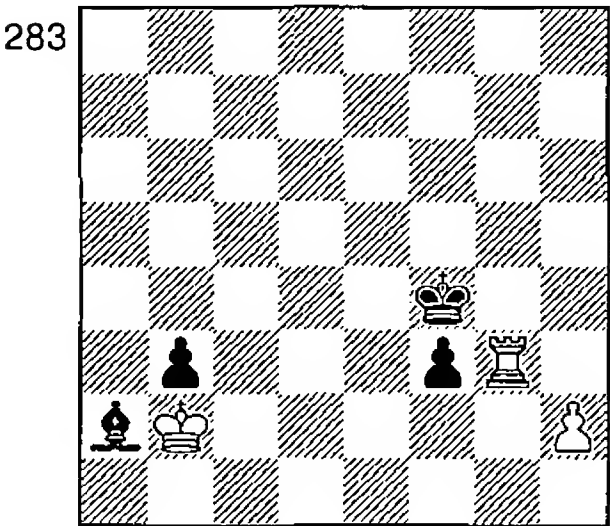


*Q. In the diagram position, from the game **Winter–Capablanca** (Hastings 1919), is the pin of the f6-knight dangerous for Black?*

Every piece aspires to be active and mobile; the pieces need space. A piece with limited scope loses almost all its fighting qualities. If a player succeeds in cutting off an enemy piece from participating in the fight, we can say that this player is effectively a piece ahead and can be considered to have a winning game from this moment onward. However, in chess everything depends on the particulars of the position and surprising transformations often occur, as is shown in the following example:



In the game **Borisenkov–Mezentsev** (USSR 1950), White tried to corral the black bishop by means of the maneuver 30. ♖xc6 ♜xc6 31. ♔c3 ♜xc5+ 32. ♔b2. Eventually, the game reached the position in Diagram 420.



Here Black missed the opportunity to liberate his imprisoned piece by the unexpected continuation 58...f2! 59. ♜g8 ♔b1!, when 60. ♔xb1 f1♔+ or 60. ♜f8+ ♔f5! both win for Black.

Returning to **Winter–Capablanca**, we find a classic example of corralling.

10 ... g5!

White cannot exploit this advance, as 11. ♖xg5 is met by 11...♜xd5 and Black wins a piece.

11. ♜xf6+ ...

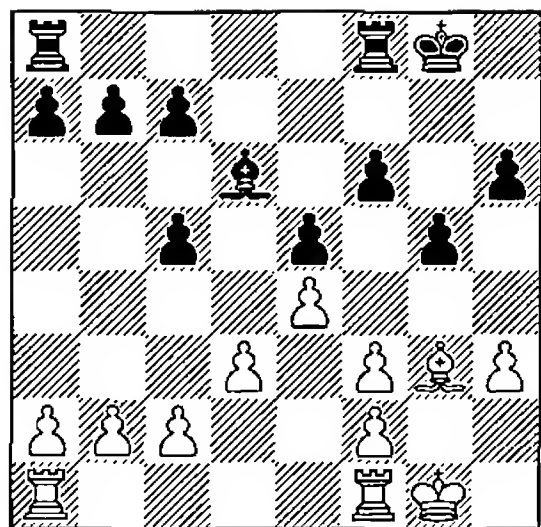
Now White's position is difficult, since his bishop becomes imprisoned. However, 11. ♔g3 leaves a poor impression after 11...♜xd5 12. exd5 ♔g4 13. h3 ♔h5 14. ♜e1 ♜e8. Black would later attack the d5-pawn, forcing the move c2-c4, when a subsequent ...c7-c6 would expose the weakness on d3.

11 ... ♔xf6
12. ♔g3 ♔g4
13. h3 ♔xh3
14. ♜xf3 ♜xf3

15. gxf3

f6

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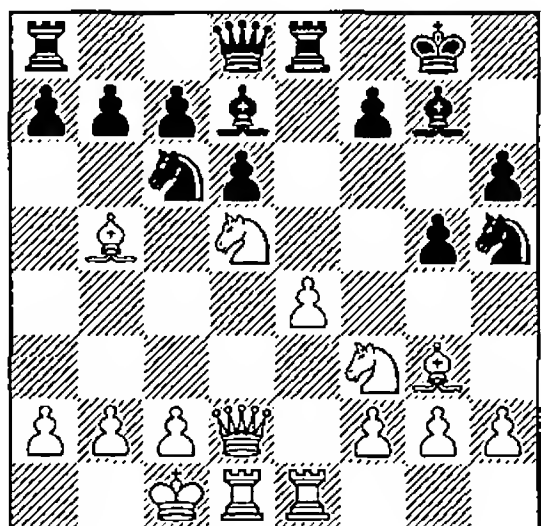
We need only look at the board to see that White's bishop is immobilized. It might possibly be freed at the expense of time and material, but in the meantime Black turns all his energies to the queenside. Capablanca was particularly adept at isolating an opponent's piece and then instigating a decisive attack on the opposite side of the board, effectively playing a piece ahead.

16. ♔g2 a5 17. a4 ♔f7 18. ♖h1 ♔e6 19. h4 ♖fb8 20. hxc5 hxc5 21. b3 c6 22. ♖a2 b5 23. ♖ha1 c4 24. axb4 cxb3 25. cxb3 ♖xb5 26. ♖a4 ♖xb3 27. d4 ♖b5 28. ♖c4 ♖b4 29. ♖xc6 ♖xd4 0-1

No. 90:

Playing with an Extra Piece

285



Q. Evaluate 14...a6.

14 ...

a6!

According to Capablanca, the pieces should operate harmoniously. In the game **Morrison—Capablanca** (New York 1918), he aims to evict the bishop from its active position.

15. ♖d3

...

It was better to withdraw the bishop all the way back to f1.

15 ...

♖e6

The black pieces begin to exert pressure on the position of the white king.

16. c3

...

It was much stronger to play 16. ♘e3, but White does not sense the danger. White is only concerned with an attack against his king and therefore blocks the line of Black's dark-squared bishop, with the intention of putting his bishop on b1 and the queen on c2 to attack along the diagonal b1-h7. However, he never gets the chance to do this.

16 ...

f5!

With the advance ...f7-f5-f4, Capablanca cuts off White's dark-squared bishop. He will then have an "extra" piece to attack the white king.

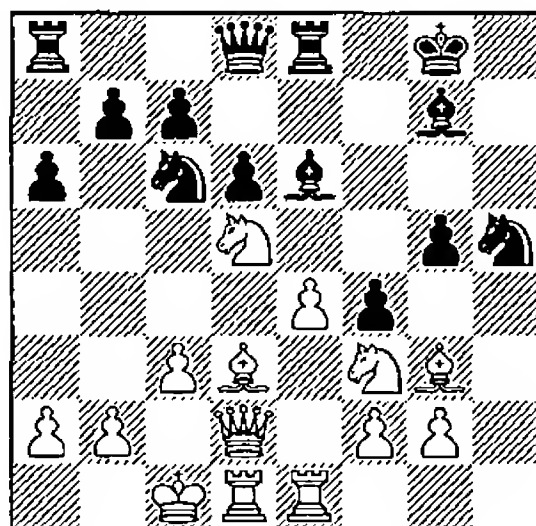
17. h4

f4

18. hxc5

hxc5!

286



Black continues very consistently, and is not tempted by the win of a piece: 18...fxg3?! 19. hxg3 ♖e5 20. ♖h1 ♖xd5 21. ♖xh5 with sharp play.

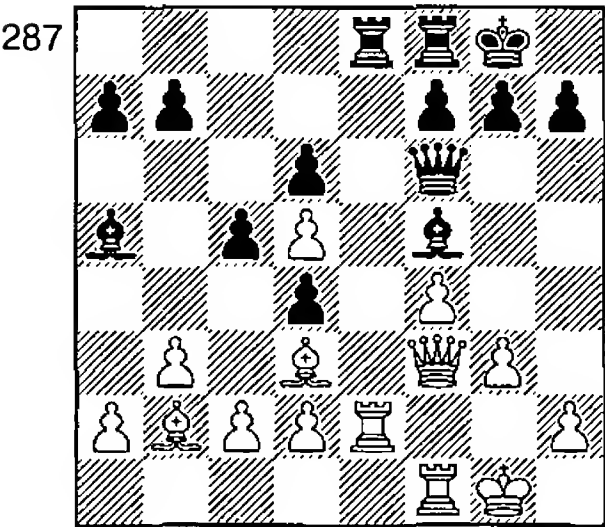
19. ♖h1 ♖f7
20. ♖b1 ♖e5
21. ♖xe5 ♖xe5
22. ♖h2 ♖f6!

Now that the bishop has been driven to a hopeless post, Capablanca targets the strong piece on d5, which can be considered the key to White's position. This maneuver also enhances the harmony of Capablanca's forces. The rest of the game does not require comment.

23. g3 ♖xe4 24. ♖xe4 ♖xe4 25. gxf4 c6 26. ♖e3 ♖a5 27. c4 ♖xd2 28. ♖xd2 gxf4 29. ♖g4 ♖g6 30. ♖a1 ♖ae8 31. a3 ♖e1+ 32. ♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 33. ♖a2 ♖f7 34. ♖b3 d5 35. ♖xf4 dxc4+ 36. ♖b4 c3 37. bxc3 ♖e4+ 38. ♖a5 ♖xf4 39. ♖d8+ ♖h7 40. ♖d7 ♖e6 0-1

No. 91:

Stranded on the Queenside



Q. Can White play 16. g3?

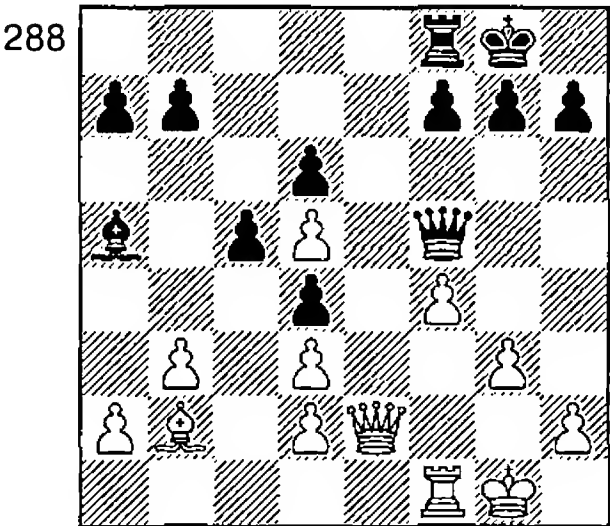
This move, from the game **Wolf–Alekhine** (Karlsbad 1923), brings to

mind Tartakover's aphorism: "The mistakes are all there, waiting to be made." White should continue the fight and play 16. ♖c1. Now Black takes advantage of his opponent's oversight.

- 16... ♖xd3!
17. cxd3 ...

Other continuations fail for tactical reasons: 17. ♖xd3 ♖xc2 18. ♖xe2 d3!, or 17. ♖xe8 ♖xf1 18. ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 19. ♖xf1 ♖xd2. The upshot is that white's queen's bishop is cut off.

- 17... ♖xe2
18. ♖xe2 ♖f5

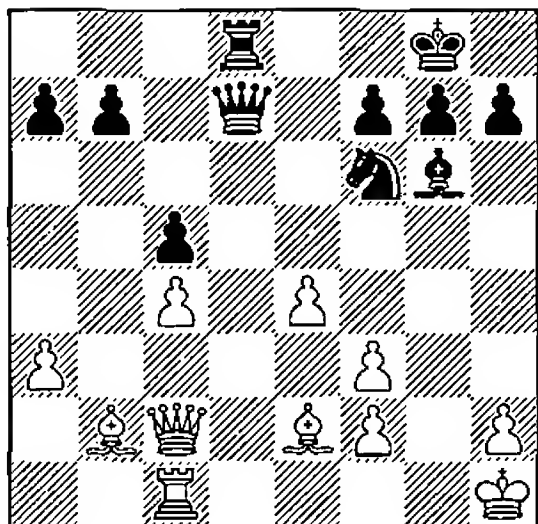


Material losses are inevitable for White, but his main problem is that his bishop is AWOL on the queenside and it is practically impossible to return it to the scene of the action.

19. ♖f2 ♖xd5 20. ♖e4 ♖e6 21. f5 ♖e5 22. ♖xe5 dxe5 23. ♖g2 f6 24. ♖f3 ♖d8! 25. ♖e4 ♖e7 26. ♖f1 ♖d8 27. ♖c1 a5 28. ♖a3 b6 29. g4 ♖f7 30. h4 g6 31. ♖f1 h5 32. fxg6 ♖xg6 33. gxh6 ♖f7 34. h6 ♖e6 35. ♖g1 ♖h8 36. ♖g6 ♖f8 0-1

No. 92: Another Stranded Bishop

289



A. Is White better in the diagram position, or is the game equal?

B. How should White continue?

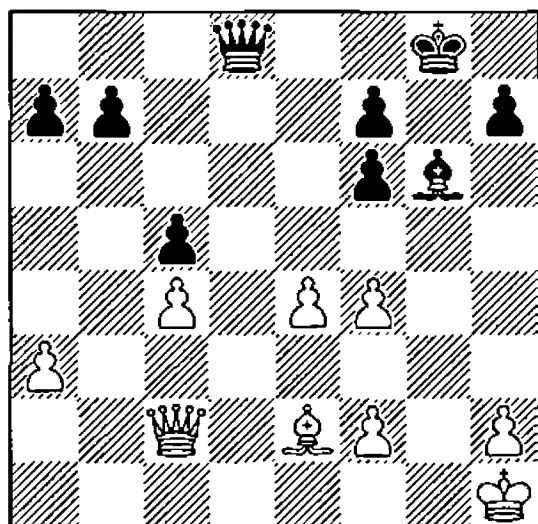
In the game **Shevchenko–Artamonov** (corr. 1979), White is much better because Black's light-squared bishop is corralled on the kingside. White's next move underscores his advantage.

21. ♖xf6! ...

It may seem counterintuitive to relinquish the advantage of the bishop pair, but White is merely trading one type of advantage for another.

21 ... gxf6
22. ♖d1 ♖e7
23. ♖xd8+! ♖xd8
24. f4! ...

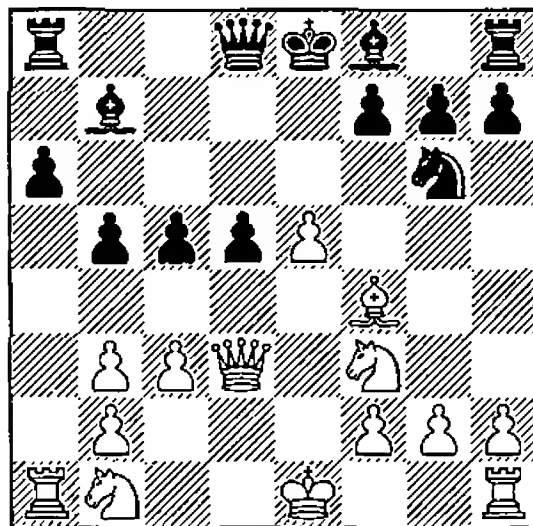
290



The exchanges exemplify the maxim that what remains on the board is more important than what comes off the board. White went on to win, as he is effectively a piece ahead.

No. 93: The Useless Piece

291



Q. Should White play 13. ♖g5 or 13. ♖g3?

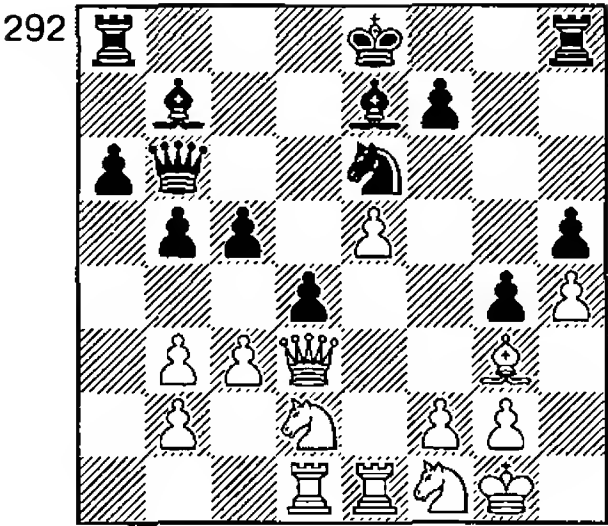
13. ♖g3?! ...

In **Addison–Fischer** (New York 1963), this move led to the bishop's being isolated on the kingside. True, even after 13. ♖g5 ♖e7 14. ♖xe7 ♖xe7 15. ♖e3 Black keeps a positional plus in view of the mobile pawn phalanx on the queenside and the strong light-squared bishop that threatens to become active after ...d5-d4. But all the same, White should at least try to get rid of the bad bishop despite the fact that Black also has 13... ♖c7! at his disposal.

13... ♖e7 14. ♖bd2 ♖f8 15. 0-0 ♖e6 16. ♖ad1 g5 17. h3 h5 18. ♖fe1 ♖b6 19. ♖f1 d4 20. ♖3d2 g4 21. h4:

(See Diagram 292)

As a result of Black's systematic actions, one more weakness appears – on h4.

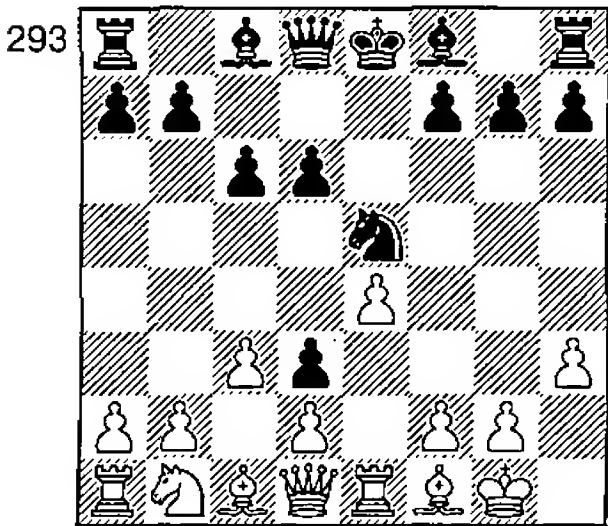


21... ♖c6 22. ♖e4 0-0-0 23. ♖xc6+ ♗xc6 24. c4 ♖d7 25. ♖a1 ♖a8 26. ♗e4 ♗xe4 27. ♖xe4 ♗g7 28. ♗d2 ♗f5 29. ♖f4 ♗e6 30. ♗e4 bxc4 31. bxc4 ♖hb8 32. ♖a2 ♖b4 33. ♗d2 ♗xh4

White finally gets rid of the bishop, but he cannot save the game.

34. ♗xh4 ♗xh4 35. ♖e4 ♗g5 36. f4 gxf3 37. ♗xf3 ♗e3+ 38. ♗h2 ♖xc4 0-1

No. 94: A Useless Queenside



Q. Evaluate 11. f4.

A quick glance at the position is enough to determine that the black pawn on d3 completely paralyzes the opponent's queenside. In the game H.-J.Hecht—Ru.Keller (Switzerland 1966), White's desire to destroy the pawn im-

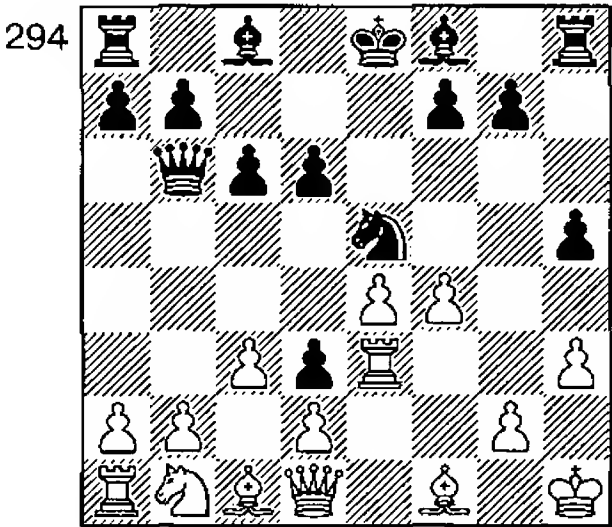
mediately led him to play 11. f4. However, a surprising answer awaited him.

11 ... ♖b6+
12. ♖h1 h5!

Once again we see that all is not so simple in chess as it first seems. The passive position of the white pieces allows Black to attack on the kingside.

13. ♖e3 ...

It turns out that the knight cannot be captured. After 13. fxe5 ♗g4 14. ♖b3 ♖f2 15. ♖d1, Black wins by 15... ♖h6 16. ♗d3 ♗f3 17. ♖gl ♖g6 18. ♗fl ♖g3. This position is so colorful that it deserves its own diagram. White's paralyzed pieces are helpless against the primitive threat of 19... ♖xh3#:



In this variation, instead of 15. ♖d1, the game Ujtumen—Lein (Sochi 1965) continued 15. ♖xb7, but after 15... ♖d8 16. ♖d1 ♗xd1 17. ♖xc6+ ♗e7 18. ♖c7+ ♖d7 19. exd6+ ♗f6 20. e5+ ♗xe5 21. ♖xd7 ♖xf1+ 22. ♗h2 ♗d6 23. c4 ♖f4+ 24. ♗hl ♗f6 it was all over.

13 ... ♗c4
14. ♖g3 ♗g4
15. ♖e1 ♗xb2
16. ♖e3 ♗d1
17. ♖xb6 axb6
18. bxc4 ...

18. ♖g1 ♕e2 seals in of all White's forces.

18 ... hxc4+

19. ♖g1 d5

20. ♕xd3 ♕c5+

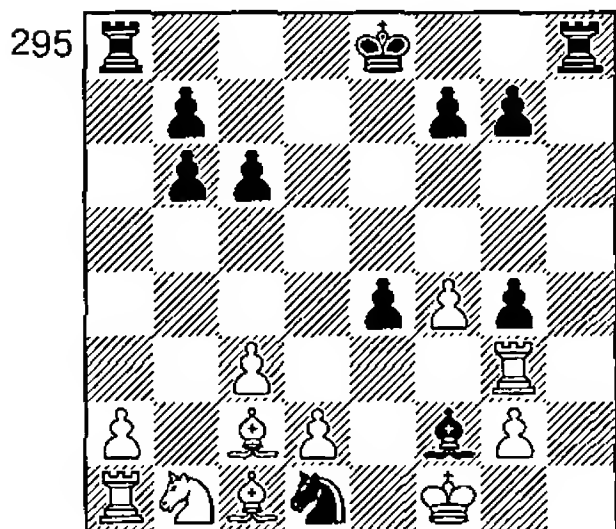
21. ♖f1 dxe4

22. ♕c2 ...

22. ♕xe4 loses material after 22... ♖f2 23. ♕f5 ♖h1+ 24. ♖e2 ♖xc1 25. d4 ♕a3 26. ♖f2 ♕b2. However, White's position is still pathetic.

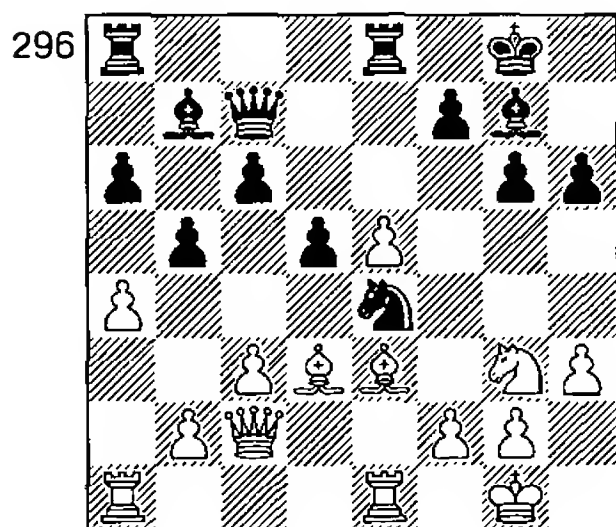
22 ... ♕f2!

0-1



White resigned, as the variations 23. ♕xd1 ♕xg3 24. ♕c2 ♖h1+ 25. ♖e2 ♖el#, or 24. d3 ♖h1+ 25. ♖e2 ♖e1+ 26. ♖d2 e3+ 27. ♖c2 e2, are too convincing.

No. 95: The Big Pawn



Q. Should White play 22. ♕xe4, or 22. ♕xe4?

22. ♕xe4! ...

To preserve the material balance, a capture on e4 is inevitable. The question is, which way? Grandmaster skill becomes apparent in the ability to make the correct choice – which pieces to exchange and which to leave on the board. In the game **Boleslavsky–Liebert** (Belarus–East Germany Match 1969), White chose to capture with the bishop because the g3-knight will find an outpost on d6 and because Black does not have time to activate his light-squared bishop.

22 ... dxe4

23. ♖xe4 ♖xe5

White gains the upper hand as Black is forced to give up the important dark-squared bishop that defends the black king. 23... ♖xe5 would be met by 24. ♕f4, and 23... ♕xe5 by 24. ♕xh6.

24. ♕d4 ♖c7

With 24... ♖f5, Black could compel White to weaken the kingside by 25. g4, as White needs to be released from the pin. However, Black could not take advantage of this weakness as his light-squared bishop remains out of play behind the queenside pawns.

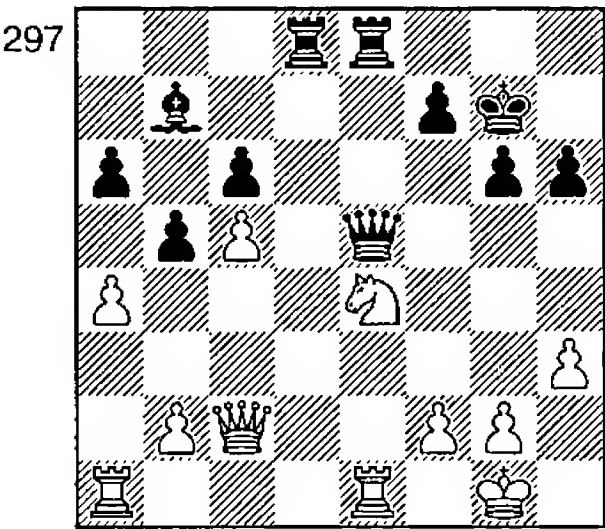
25. ♕xg7 ♖xg7

26. c4! ...

Tactics in the service of strategy! White achieves a positional aim by tactical means. After 26... bxc4 or 26... c5 there follows 27. ♖c3+ ♖e5 28. ♖d6! winning material. Thus, Black is compelled to cover the a1-h8 diagonal, which gives White time to lock in the black bishop on b7 and create a powerful outpost for the knight.

27 ... ♖e5
27. c5 ♜ad8

Otherwise White would prepare to occupy d6 by 28. ♖d2 or 28. ♜e3, which Black could not prevent without dropping material.



28. ♞d6! ...

A crucial decision. White perceptively senses that the powerful knight on d6 and the active queen will be enough to win against the two rooks and bad bishop. After 28. ♜e3 ♖d4 29. ♜ael ♙c8!, Black could activate his bishop and White would be unable to drive the black queen away from the long diagonal.

28 ... ♖xe1+

Black has no choice but to exchange the queen for the two rooks.

29. ♜xe1 ♜xe1+
30. ♙h2 ♜e7

This is the only one move. Besides 31. ♞xb7, White threatened 31. ♖c3+ winning the rook.

31. ♖c3 f6
32. ♖a5 ♜dd7
33. b3 ...

There is no need to hurry. First it is necessary to free the queen from the defense of the a4-pawn.

33 ... h5
34. h4 ♙xh7
35. ♖b6 bxa4

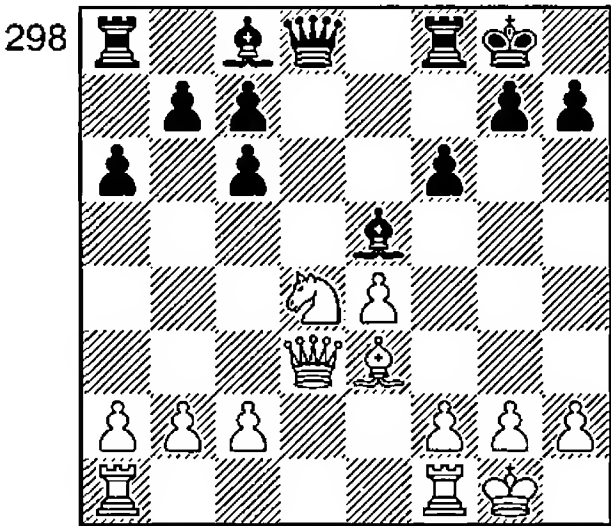
Now the white royal is free to operate on both flanks; from b2 it can attack the b7-bishop and the f6-pawn. If Black did not exchange on a4, White's task would not be too difficult as Black's pieces are absolutely tied up; for example, 35... ♖g7 36. a5 ♖h7 37. b4 ♖g7 38. f3 f5 39. ♖g3 ♖h7 40. ♖f4 ♖h6 41. ♞xb7 ♜xb7 42. ♖xc6 ♜a7 43. ♖b6 ♜a8 44. c6 ♜aa7 45. ♖xa7 ♜xa7 46. ♙e5 g5 47. ♙d6 gxh4 48. f4 and wins.

36. bxa4 ♙g7
37. a5 ♙h7
38. f3 ...

White could enter an ending in which the queen and two pawns battle against two rooks by 38. ♞xb7 ♜xb7 39. ♖xc6, but the pawn storm on the kingside wins more quickly.

38... ♖g7 39. ♖g3 ♖h7 40. ♖f4 ♖g7
41. g4 hxg4 42. fxg4 ♖h7 43. ♖b2 1-0

No. 96: Knowing the Classics



Q. Is the bishop pair su compensation for the doubled pawns on the queenside?

In the game **Fischer—Unzicker** (Siegen Olympiad 1970), White's kingside pawn majority proved to be the decisive factor. Black's two bishops provide insufficient compensation.

13. f4! ...

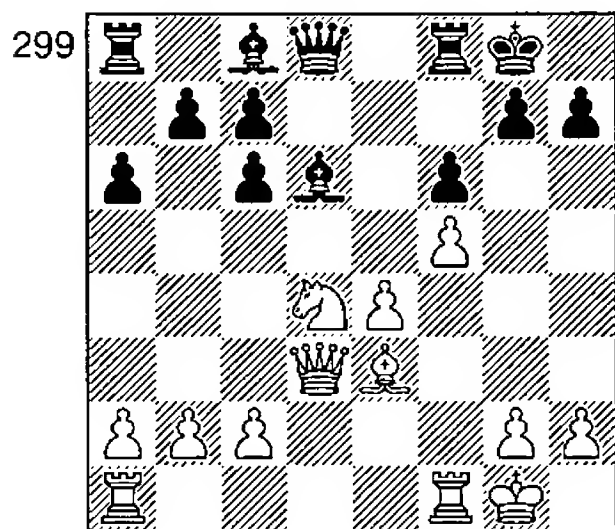
This is the correct decision. White is not afraid of simplifying the position, or of the possibility of opposite-colored bishops.

13 ... ♖d6

Relatively best was 13...♗xd4 14. ♗xd4 ♖e6, but Black would still be struggling for a draw without the slightest counterchances. Now White manages to keep the opponent's light-squared bishop out of the game and his advantage increases.

14. f5! ...

This is reminiscent of the well-known game **Lasker—Capablanca** (St. Petersburg 1914):



From the diagram position White advanced f4-f5 and later won. Fischer was undoubtedly familiar with this classic game.

14 ... ♖e7

No matter how great the opponent's advantage might be, it is always necessary to make the most of even the slightest

chances. In this position, Black should understand that he needs to play ...c6-c5 to activate the light-squared bishop, but this is bad right away because of 15. ♖b3. Hence, as GM Boris Gulko indicated, it was necessary to play 14...♗h8 15. ♗f3 b6 16. ♗d4 c5 17. ♗c3 ♗b7, when Black's position looks quite acceptable.

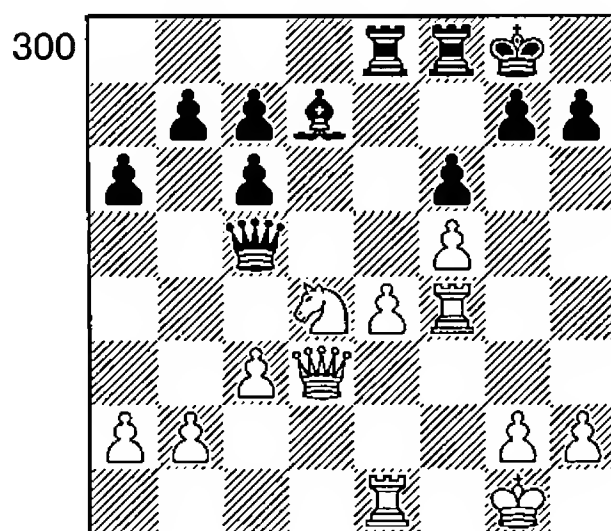
15. ♗f4 ♗xf4

Black only helps his opponent take the key square e5. He should have played 15...♗d7.

16. ♖xf4 ♗d7

17. ♖e1 ♖c5

18. c3 ♖ae8



19. g4! ...

White's purpose is clear — to organize the break e4-e5. To do this it is necessary to fortify the point f5 and place the queen on g3. But White doesn't want the queen to block the g-pawn; thus, the move in the game was envisioned.

19 ... ♖d6

20. ♖g3 ♖e7

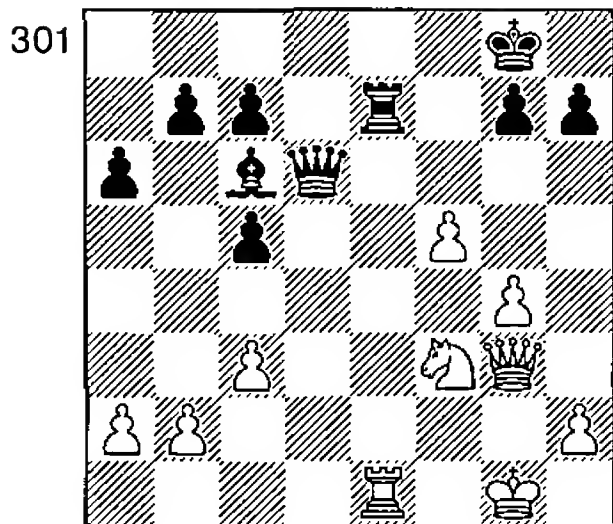
21. ♗f3 c5

21...♖fe8 does not stop the break either.

22. e5 fxe5

23. ♖fe4 ♗c6

24. ♖xe5 ♖fe8
25. ♖xe7 ♖xe7



26. ♘e5 ...

The first stage of White's plan is complete and his advantage is palpable. Yet the kingside pawn storm goes on – and the plan remains the same.

26 ... h6
27. h4 ♙d7
28. ♖f4 ♖f6
29. ♖e2 ...

The value of the extra kingside pawn increases with each move.

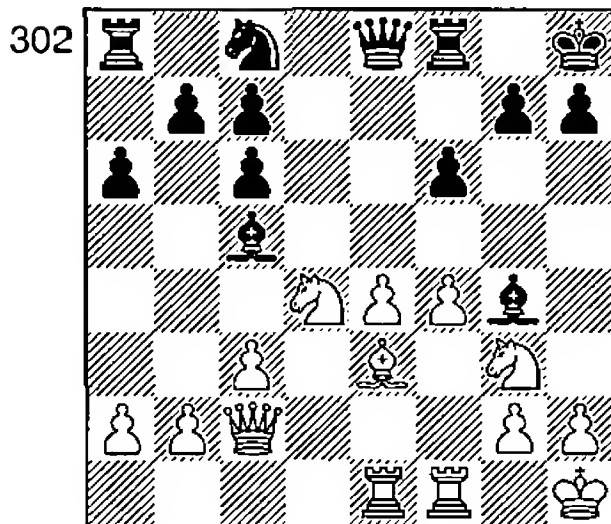
29 ... ♙c8
30. ♖c4+ ♙h7
31. ♘g6 ♖xe2
32. ♖xe2 ♙d7
33. ♖e7! ...

This forces the exchange of queens and the game enters an ending in which Black is practically playing without his king.

33... ♖xe7 34. ♘xe7 g5 35. hxg5 hxg5 36. ♘d5! ♙c6 37. ♘xc7 ♙f3 38. ♙e8 ♙h6 39. ♘f6 ♙g7 40. ♙f2 ♙d1 41. ♘d7 c4 42. ♙g3 1-0

The game shows that a mobile extra pawn on the flank gives an advantage in force if the opponent lacks good counterplay.

No. 97: Ignoring the Looming Danger



Q. Here Black played 16... ♘b6. Is this a) a good move that suits the spirit of the position; or b) a mistake that leaves Black worse off?

16 ... ♘b6

In the game Chiburdanidze–Stolnikova (Voronezh 1975), Black does not resist the growing pressure of the white pieces in the best possible way. 16... ♙d7 was the lesser evil.

17. f5! ...

This excellent attack brings real benefits. White threatens to play 18. ♘e6, putting the light-squared bishop on the kingside in danger.

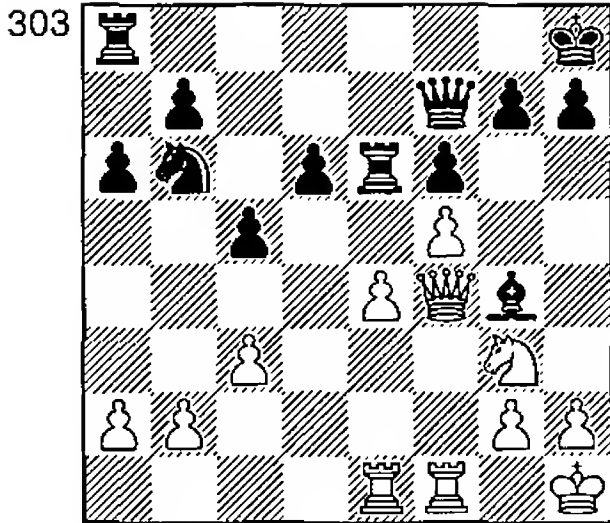
17... ♙d6
18. ♙f4 ♖f7
19. ♘e6 ♖fe8

Now White wins material by force.

19... ♖g8 was stronger.

20. ♙xd6 cxd6
21. ♖f2 c5
22. ♖f4 ♖xe6

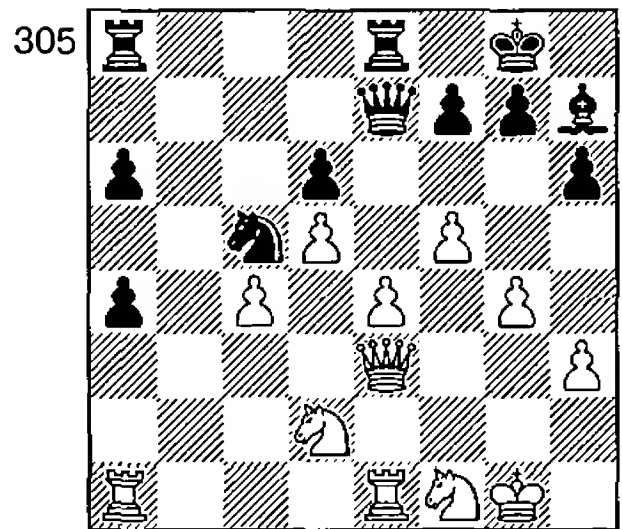
This sacrifice was forced. After 22... ♙h5, there follows 23. ♘xh5 ♖xh5 24. ♘c7.



23. fxe6 ♗xe6 24. ♔xd6 ♘c4 25. ♔xc5 ♘xb2 26. ♖b1 ♘c4 27. ♗fd1 ♘e5 28. a3 ♘c4 29. ♘f5 1-0

Black creates a passed pawn on the queenside, but this is an insignificant factor compared to the soon-to-be imprisoned bishop.

25. bxc4 ♘c5
26. ♔e3 bxa4
27. f4! ♔e7
28. g4 ...
If 28. f5, Black could play 28...f6.
28 ... ♗g6
29. f5 ♗h7



The diagram position well illustrates how the bishop is absolutely cut off from the battlefield. White's extra piece more than compensates for his weakened pawn structure. However, we need to keep in mind that the bishop will return to play sooner or later, so White cannot afford to waste time.

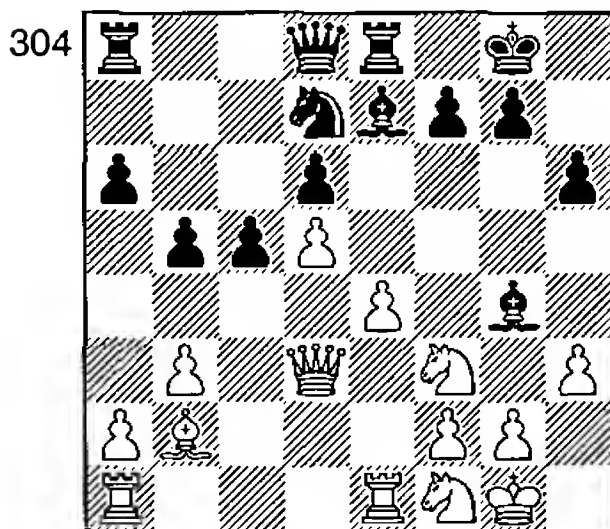
30. ♘g3 ♔e5
31. ♔g2 ...

For the ending it would be better to bring the king closer to the center on f2.

31 ... ♖ab8
32. ♖ab1 f6

A multi-purpose move. First, Black takes steps to prevent e4-e5 once the queen leaves its post. Second, it prepares to return the bishop into play. However, this move creates a hole in Black's pawn

No. 98: The Walled-Off Bishop



Q. Should Black prefer 21...♗h5, or 21...♗xf3?

21 ... ♗b5?

In the game **Capablanca–Bogolyubov** (London 1922), Black would have had bright prospects with 21...♗xf3 22. ♔xf3 ♗f6. But now the black light-squared bishop is out of play and this is the chief reason for Black's subsequent defeat.

22. ♘3d2! ♗f6
23. ♗xf6 ♔xf6
24. a4! c4

structure on e6. Bogolyubov should also have seriously considered 32...♖b2.

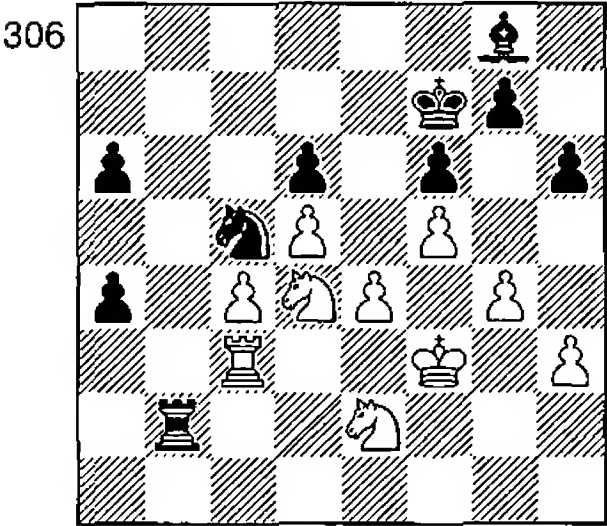
33. ♖f3
34. ♖xb2
35. ♖e2
36. ♖d4
- ♗b2
- ♗xb2
- ♗b3
- ♗xe3

After 36...♗xc4, there follows 37. ♖e6 with a big advantage.

37. ♖xe3
38. ♖c3
- ♗b8
- ♗f7

38...♗b2+ 39. ♖f3 ♖b3 40. ♗e3 ♖d2 41. c5 ♖b1 42. c6! doesn't help Black.

39. ♖f3
40. ♖ge2
- ♗b2
- ♗g8



41. ♖e6!
- ♖

Black cannot afford to trade knights, as that would shut out the light-squared bishop completely. Also unpleasant is 41...♖xe4? 42. ♖xe4 ♖xe2+ 43. ♖d4 ♖d2+ 44. ♖d3. White's advantage grows with every trade, while the position of the black king, chained to the kingside pawns, is unenviable.

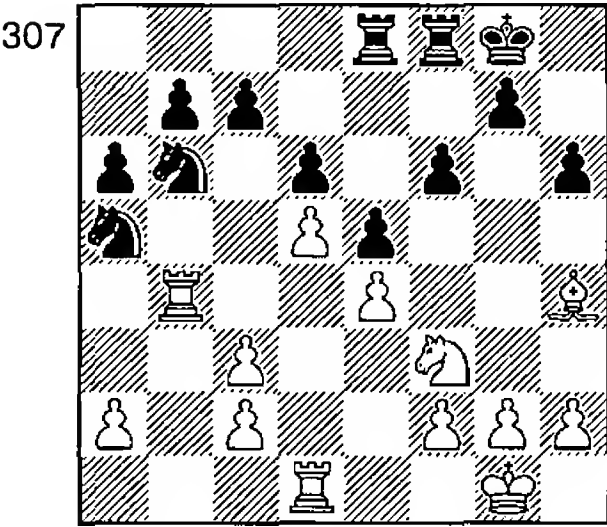
42. c5!
- dxc5

Here is an interesting variation that illustrates Black's plight: 42...a3 43. cxd6 a2 44. ♖c7+ ♖e8 45. ♖e7#.

43. ♖c5 ♖d2+ 44. ♖f2 ♖e7 45. ♖e1 ♖b1 46. ♖d3 a3 47. d6+ ♖d8 48.

- ♖d4! ♖b6 49. ♖de6 ♖xe6 50. fxe6 ♖b8 51. e7+ ♖e8 52. ♖xa6 1-0

No. 99: The Isolated Rook



Q. Evaluate the diagram position and suggest a plan for Black.

- 20 ...
21. ♖g3
- g5!
- ...

This position, from Golovko–Vasilchuk (Moscow 1958), can be evaluated as uncomfortable for White. Black's last move limits the scope of the white bishop and White's queenside pawns are weak. Moreover, the black knights are fairly active and Black retains the possibility of weakening White's d5-pawn.

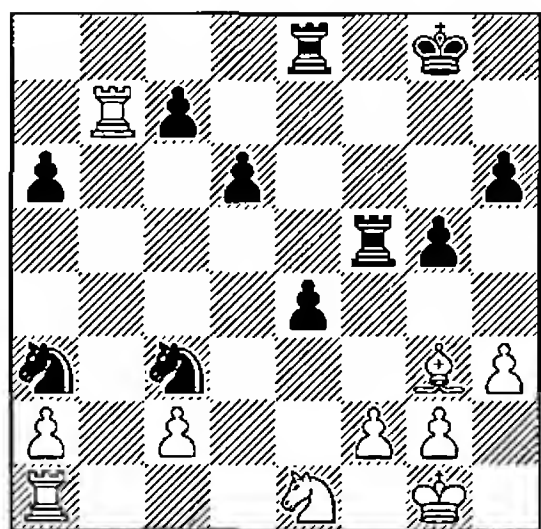
- 21 ...
22. exf5
23. ♖e1
- 23 ...
24. ♖d4
25. h3
26. ♖b4
- f5!
- e4
- ...
- ♖xf5
- ♖ac4
- ♖a3
- ...

If 23. ♖d4, then 23...♖d5.

On any other move Black would reply 26...♖b5.

- 26...
27. ♖xb7
28. ♖a1
- ♖xd5
- ♖xc3
- ...

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28... ♖cb5!

Now, thanks to Black's piece maneuvers, the b7-rook is out of play. Meanwhile, Black threatens the knight maneuver a3-c4-a5.

29. f3 exf3

30. ♖xf3 ♖xc2

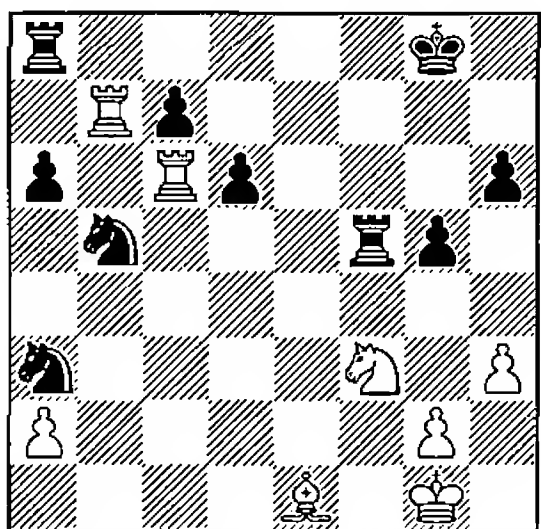
Also possible was 30... ♖c4, but Black wants to leave the rook isolated.

31. ♖c1 ♖ca3

32. ♖c6 ♖a8

33. ♕e1 ...

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33 ... ♖c5!

Black adheres to the policy of exchanging the opponent's active pieces, leaving White with ever fewer fighting units capable of resistance.

34. ♖xc5 dxc5

35. ♕g3 ♖c8

36. ♖e5 c4

37. ♖c6 c3

38. ♕e5 ...

38. ♖e7+ ♖f7 39. ♖xc8 c2 is senseless.

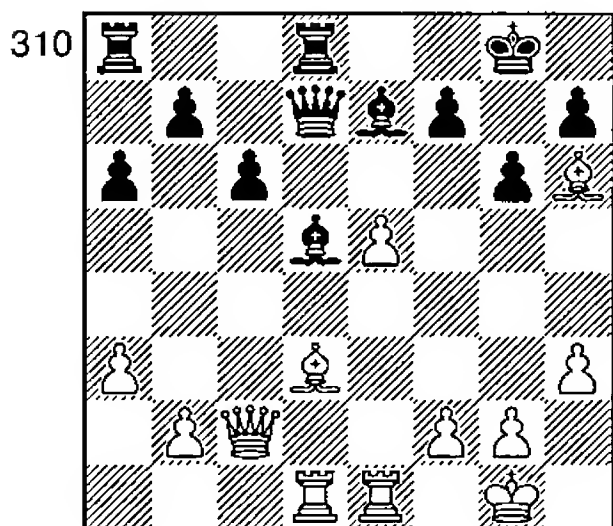
38 ... c2

0-1

To conclude this theme, it will be useful for the reader to play through and perhaps analyze for himself the game **Capablanca—Black** (New York 1916): 1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♖c6 3. ♕b5 a6 4. ♕a4 ♖f6 5. 0-0 ♕e7 6. ♖e1 d6 7. c3 0-0 8. d4 b5 9. ♕c2 ♕g4 10. d5 ♖b8 11. h3 ♕h5 12. ♖bd2 ♖bd7 13. ♖f1 ♖e8 14. g4 ♕g6 15. ♖g3 h6 16. a4 ♖h7 17. ♖e2 ♖b8 18. axb5 axb5 19. b4 ♖c8 20. ♕d3 c6 21. dxc6 ♖xc6 22. ♖a5 ♖xc3 23. ♕xb5 ♖c7 24. ♕e3 ♖ed8 25. ♖c1 ♖b7 26. ♕c6 ♖xb4 27. ♖a4 ♖b3 28. ♖a7 ♖hf8 29. ♖d2 ♖b2 30. ♖d1 ♕g5 31. ♖c2 ♕xe3 32. ♖xb2 ♕xa7 33. ♖xb8 ♖xb8 34. ♕d5 ♖e6 35. ♖e2 ♖d7 36. ♖a4 ♕b8 37. ♖a2 ♖dc5 38. f3 ♖f8 39. ♖c4 ♖e7 40. ♖a5 ♖f6 41. ♖c6 ♖c8 42. h4 ♕c7 43. f4 ♕xe4 44. g5+ hxg5 45. hxg5+ ♖xg5 46. fxg5+ ♖xg5 47. ♕xe4 ♖xe4 48. ♖xf7 ♕b6 49. ♖g2 ♖xc6 50. ♖xg7+ ♖h5 51. ♖h7+ ♖g5 52. ♖xe4 ♖c7 53. ♖g3 ♖f6 54. ♖d5 ♕c5 55. ♖e4 ♖e7 56. ♖f3 ♖d7 57. ♖g4 ♖c6 58. ♖f7+ ♖c8 59. ♖f6 ♖c7 60. ♖e8+ ♖b7 61. ♖d5 ♖c8 62. ♖b5+ ♖a7 63. ♖ 1-0.

A lot of time has passed since Tarrasch declared, "If one piece is badly posted, the whole game is bad." This assertion might seem too categorical, but plenty of examples can be found to confirm its legitimacy. Exploiting the poor position of an opponent's pieces is just one method that the ambitious player needs to learn on the road to chess mastery.

No. 100: A Favorable Change in Pawn Structure



Q. How should White proceed?

22. e6! ...

In the game **Kasparov–Karpov** (World Championship [48] 1984), White takes advantage of the opportunity to change the pawn structure in his favor.

22... **fxe6**

23. ♖xg6 **♙f8**

Black could have played 23...♙f6 to cover the a1–h8 diagonal and let the king find shelter in the corner, but Karpov considered it more useful to reduce White's attacking potential by exchanging pieces.

24. ♙xf8 **♖xf8**

25. ♙e4 ...

White's direct attack is averted, but his positional achievements remain. The question is whether they are enough to overcome the defensive fortifications.

25 ... **♖f7**

After this natural move Black's difficulties increase. A better defense was 25...♙h8 because the rook ending after 26. ♙c3+ ♙g7 27. ♙xd5 exd5 28. ♖e7 ♙xc3 29. bxc3 ♖ae8 was no more dangerous than the ending that arose in the game.

26. ♖e3 **♖g7**

27. ♖dd3 ...

White uses the third rank to attack with the major pieces.

27 ... **♖f8**

If Black trades on e4, the e6-pawn becomes an object for attack.

28. ♖g3 **♙h8**

Black has no time for 28...♖f7 because of 29. ♙xh7+.

29. ♙c3 ...

Strongest. After 29. ♖g4, Black keeps the material balance.

29 ... **♖f7**

30. ♖de3 ...

White grasps the main defect in Black's position – the weakness of the e6-pawn.

30 ... **♙g8**

After 30...♙xe4 31. ♖xe4 ♙g8 32. ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 33. ♙e5, White's initiative would decide.

31. ♙e5 **♙c7**

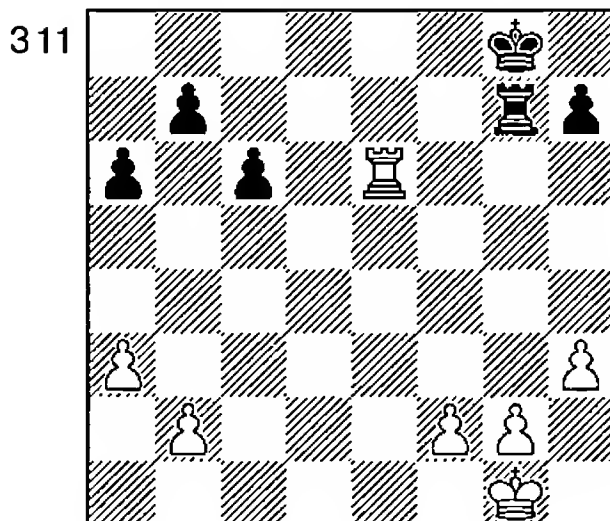
It is necessary to abandon the pawn. White intended 32. ♖xg7 ♖xg7 33. ♙b8+. The same would follow after 31...♙xe4.

32. ♖xg7+ **♖xg7**

33. ♙xd5 **♙xe5**

34. ♙xe6+ **♙xe6**

35. ♖xe6 ...



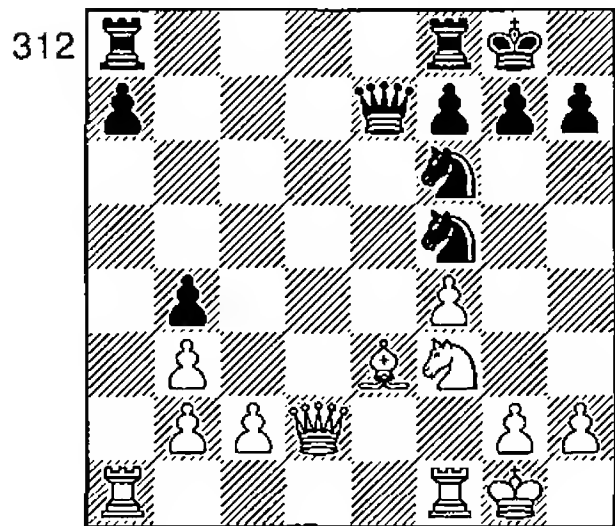
Here Averbakh wrote, "The game has transposed into a won ending for White: subsequently he will create a pair of passed pawns on the kingside, and Black has no way to oppose this."

35...♖d7 36. b4 ♕f7 37. ♖e3 ♖d1+ 38. ♕h2 ♖c1 39. g4 b5 40. f4 c5

The game was adjourned in this position and White's next move was sealed. Kasparov wrote, "The adjournment session proceeded 'without any excesses' and the game concluded quite logically, although some Soviet chess experts hastened to report to the authorities that because of extreme fatigue both players had supposedly made serious mistakes."

41. bxc5 ♖xc5 42. ♖d3 ♕e7 43. ♕g3 a5 44. ♕f3 b4 45. axb4 axb4 46. ♕e4 ♖b5 47. ♖b3 ♖b8 48. ♕d5 ♕f6 49. ♕c5 ♖e8 50. ♖xb4 ♖e3 51. h4 ♖h3 52. h5 ♖h4 53. f5 ♖h1 54. ♕d5 ♖d1+ 55. ♖d4 ♖e1 56. ♕d6 ♖e8 57. ♕d7 ♖g8 58. h6 ♕f7 59. ♖c4 ♕f6 60. ♖e4 ♕f7 61. ♕d6 ♕f6 62. ♖e6+ ♕f7 63. ♖e7+ ♕f6 64. ♖g7 ♖d8+ 65. ♕c5 ♖d5+ 66. ♕c4 ♖d4+ 67. ♕c3 1-0

No. 101: Consolidation



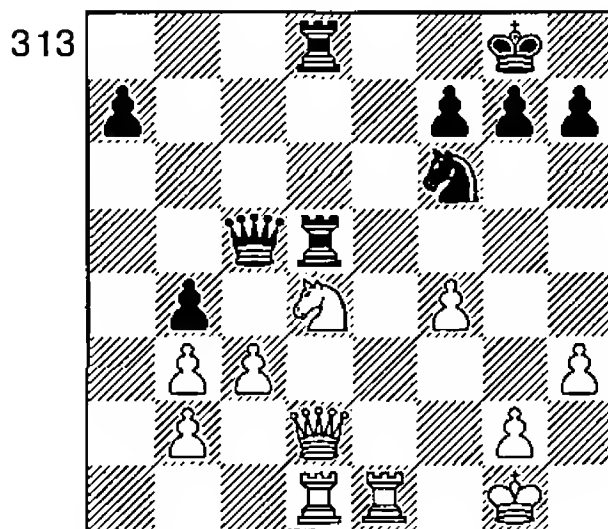
Q. How can White make the most of his material advantage?

In the game **Alekhine–Tarrasch** (St. Petersburg 1914), White has an extra pawn, but is a bit weak in the center. It often happens when pursuing a material advantage that there will be a need to consolidate one's forces once the material is acquired. Thus, Alekhine's immediate task is to organize a strongpoint on the d4 square and reinforce his grip on it.

20. ♖fe1! ♖fd8

After 20...♘e4, White plays 21. ♗d3 followed by 22. ♙d4.

21. ♙d4	♘xd4
22. ♘xd4	♗c5
23. ♖ad1	♖d5
24. h3	♖ad8
25. c3	...

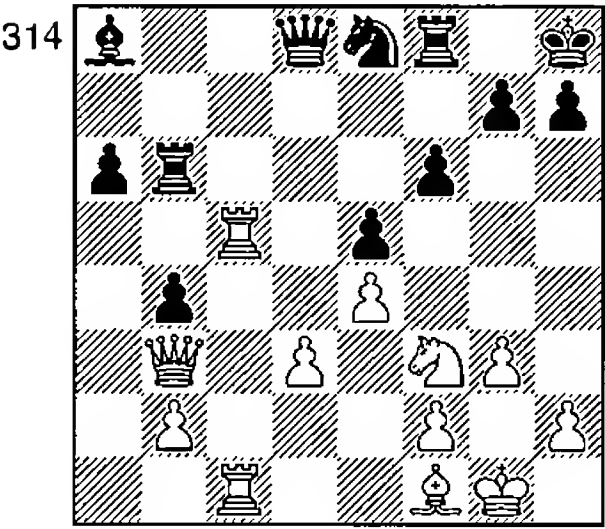


Here we can consider White's plan to be completed. The powerful post on d4 deprives Black of any hope for counterattack. Note the important role played by the c3-pawn (the extra pawn): it controls b4 and d4 and makes White's position impregnable. This game serves as a shining example of how a material advantage can bring positional benefits.

25...h6 26. ♗d3 ♗d6 27. ♗f3 ♘h5 28. ♖e4 ♘f6 29. ♖e3 ♘h5 30. ♖f1 ♘f6 31. ♖fe1 ♗c5 32. ♕h2 ♖c8 33. ♖1e2 ♕f8 34. ♖e5 ♖cd8 35. ♘f5 ♗b6 36.

♙g3 ♘h5 37. ♗h4 ♖xe5 38. fxe5 ♚d1
39. ♜e3 ♙g6 40. ♙xb4 1-0

No. 102: Single-mindedness



Q. Evaluate the diagram position and suggest a continuation for Black.

In this position from **Lysenko–Kaplun** (Kiev 1984), we note at once the equality of material and the similarity of the pieces in the opposing camps. One important aspect of the position is that Black’s pawn advances have weakened the light squares in his camp. Another is that the white rooks control the c-file and the h3-c8 diagonal is free for the taking by White’s light-squared bishop. However, Black is not defenseless. He has a pawn majority on the queenside and a potential outpost for the knight on d4. Though we would classify this position as slightly better for White, there is still a long struggle ahead, and an objective evaluation is needed from both players to formulate the proper plans.

26 ... ♘d6?

Black should have played the prophylactic 26...♗d7 to take h3 away from the white bishop. In this way Black could

hamper the coordination of White’s forces and prepare to block the c-file by ...♙c6. However, Black single-mindedly dreams of seizing the initiative and directs his knight towards the center.

27. ♘h3 ...

White is guided by the principle, “take what your opponent gives you.” Now White threatens to invade on c8, and while Black attends to this threat he is caught by a different one.

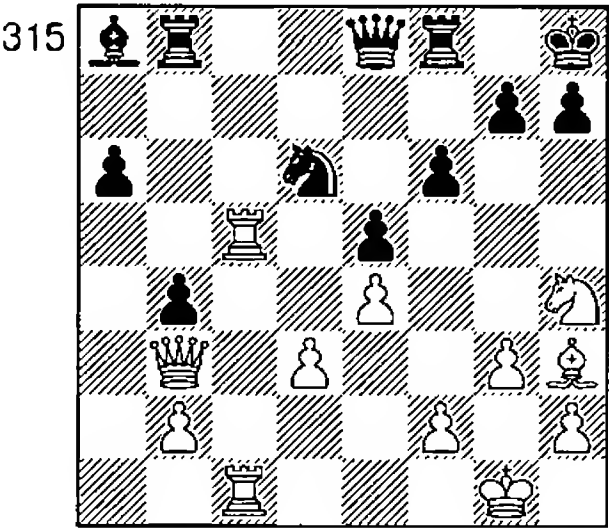
27 ... ♗e8

28. ♘h4 ...

I am confident that White already visualized the winning method.

28 ... ♖b8

Black defends the last rank and prepares to bring the knight to b5. 28...♘b5 was terrible because of 29. ♜c8.



29. ♜c7 ...

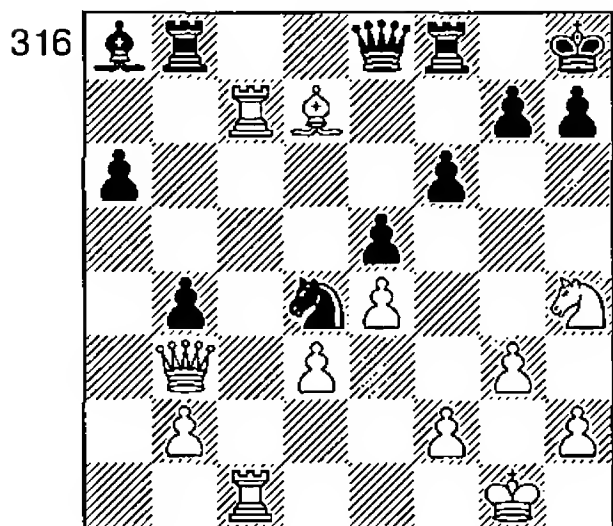
White is not afraid of the fact that the knight goes to b5 with an attack on the rook.

29 ... ♘b5

30. ♘d7 ♘d4

The “triumph” of Black’s strategy – the knight takes up residence on d4. However, Black cannot profit from this because his pieces are uncoordinated. The lone knight will only shoot at empty

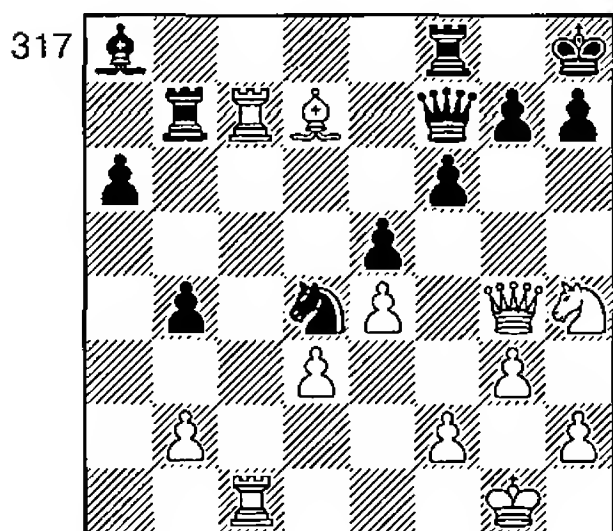
squares. Meanwhile, White's pieces work harmoniously.



31. ♔d1 ♔f7

32. ♔g4 ♔b7

Black is too late to defend the seventh rank.



33. ♕e6! ♖xc7

Of course not 33... ♖e6?? 34. ♔g7#.

34. ♖xc7 ♔xc7

35. ♘g6+! ...

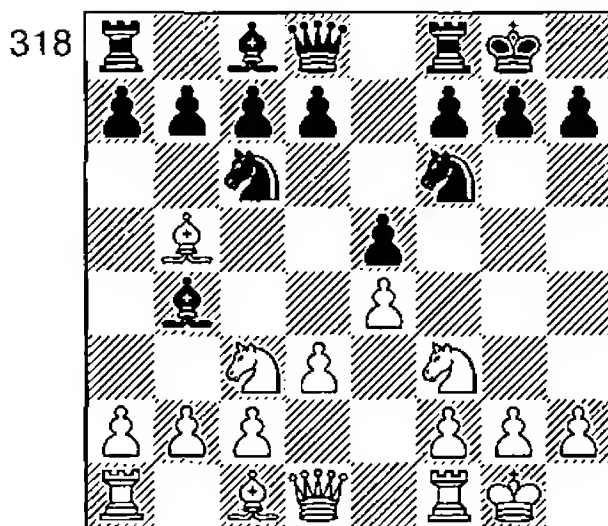
Though the final combination is standard, it is charming nonetheless.

35... hxg6

36. ♔h4#

Black's misbegotten plan of placing the knight in the center led to a biased evaluation of the position that did not fit the reality of the situation.

No. 103: "Symmetrical" Isn't the Same as "Equal"



Q. Suggest a plan for Black.

6 ... ♙xc3

The game Botvinnik–Reshevsky (World Championship Match-Tournament 1948) opened symmetrically with the moves 1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♘c3 ♘f6 4. ♙b5 ♙b4 5. 0-0 0-0 6. d3. However, it is known that it could be fatal for Black to prolong the symmetry for too long: 6...d6 7. ♙g5 ♙g4 8. ♘d5 ♘d4 9. ♘xb4 ♘xb5 10. ♘d5 ♘d4 11. ♔d2 ♙xf3 12. ♙xf6 gxf6 13. ♔h6 ♘e2+ 14. ♔h1 ♙xg2+ 15. ♔xg2 ♘f4+ 16. ♘xf4 exf4 17. ♔h1 ♔h8 18. ♖g1 ♖g8 19. ♖xg8+ ♔xg8 20. ♔g1, when White's threats decide.

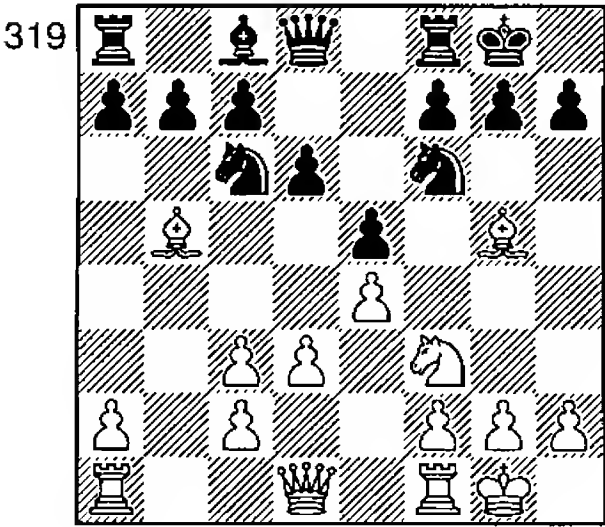
Thus, it can be dangerous for Black to copy the opponent's moves in the opening. Naturally, in this case the advantage of the first move persists for a long time. Black's difficulties in symmetrical positions also explain the prevalence, in contemporary tournament practice, of non-symmetrical openings such as the Sicilian Defense.

Unfortunately for inexperienced players studying chess theory, the line

between the opening and the middle-game is fairly fuzzy. As Alekhine once asserted, the opening stage cannot be quantified by a predetermined number of moves; it lasts until a balance is broken or a specific objective emerges. Thus, the middlegame is devoted to specific plans and goals. However, it is important to bear in mind that the game does not progress according to a single plan. A player cannot plan the whole game from the start.

Let's return to the diagram position. Black's move eliminates the white knight's annoying control over d5. Now Black has to find a suitable place for the c8-bishop, connect his rooks, and do something about the coming pin of the f6-knight. Meanwhile, White should seek to further strengthen the center; thus, the advance of the d3-pawn and the pin of the f6-knight are attractive.

7. bxc3 d6
8. ♖g5 ...



8 ... ♔e7

Black clears d8 in order to shift the c6-knight to e6, from where it will attack the g5-bishop and influence the d4 and f4 squares. If 8...h6 9. ♖h4 g5, then Black must reckon with a knight sacri-

fice on g5; and 8...♞e7 is bad because it allows White to ruin the kingside pawn structure by capturing on f6.

9. ♚e1 ♞d8
10. d4 ♞e6
11. ♙c1 ...

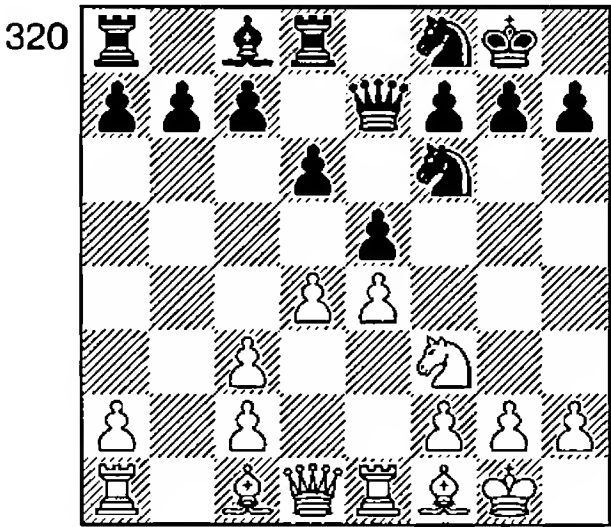
Exchanging on f6 is pointless, while if the bishop retreats to h4, then the black knight can go to f4.

11 ... ♞d8

Black certainly cannot give up the center with 11...exd4 12. cxd4. Botvinnik noted that 11...c5 was "considered by theory to be of equal merit." Then if White plays 12. dxe5, Black replies 12...dxe5 13. ♞xe5 ♞c7. And after 12. d5 ♞c7, the light-squared bishop must retreat, when Black will withdraw the f6-knight to carry out the break ...f7-f5. This flank activity will be possible because the situation in the center has stabilized.

12. ♙f1 ♞f8

Here Black should play 12...c5, or 12...♞d7.



13. ♞h4! ...

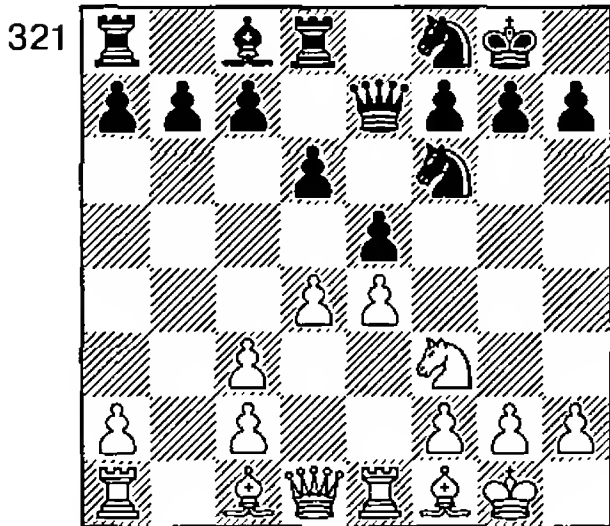
This important move deters 13...♞g6 in view of 14. ♞f5! ♙xf5 15. exf5 followed by 16. ♙d3. And on 13...♞xe4 White gets a decisive attack on the kingside: 14. ♚xe4 f5 15. ♙c4+ ♔h8 16.

♙h5 fxe4 17. ♖g5 ♙d7 18. ♖f7 exd4 19. ♖e1. Finally, 13...g6 is unacceptable because of 14. ♖g5 when the pin could be fatal. Only Keres's suggestion of 13... ♙e8 14. g3g6 gave Black a better chance to defend, though White still keeps the initiative. Note that White's attack was a consequence of Black's misguided interpretation of the position.

13 ... ♘g4
14. g3 ♙f6
15. f3 ♘h6
16. ♖e3! ...

Of course White refuses to exchange his bishop for the poorly placed knight.

16 ... ♖e8
17. ♙d2 ♘g6



18. ♘g2! ...

Exchanges would only benefit Black, as they would relieve his cramped position. And not 18. ♖g5? because of 18... ♘xh4! followed by a fork on f3.

18 ... ♖h3

18... ♙xf3 is dangerous for Black: after 19. ♖e2 ♙f6 (19... ♙xe4 20. ♖xh6 gxh6 21. ♖b5) 20. ♖c4 ♙e7 21. ♖xh6, White has a strong attack.

19. ♖e2 ...

Again White avoids the trap 19. ♖g5 ♙xf3 when 20. ♖e2 allows mate.

19... ♖xg2

20. ♙xg2 d5!

Black's pawn sacrifice is the best practical chance to complicate matters.

21. exd5 exd4

22. cxd4 ♘f5

White needs to be on the alert for Black's potential sacrifices.

23. ♖f2 ♖ed8

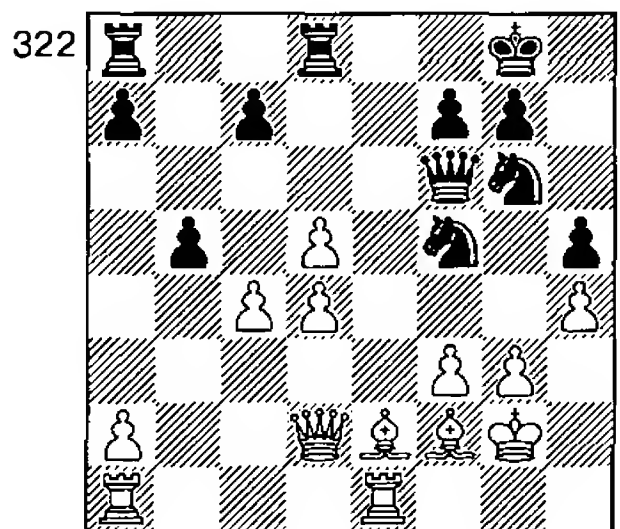
24. c4 h5

Destroying the strong pawn center by 24...b5 offered better chances. White could then continue 25. ♖ac1 bxc4 26. ♖c4 ♘fe7 27. ♙a5 ♙f5 28. ♙xc7.

25. h4 ...

This answer is impulsive. As Botvinnik noted, 25. ♖ab1! would have prevented Black's counterplay.

25 ... b5

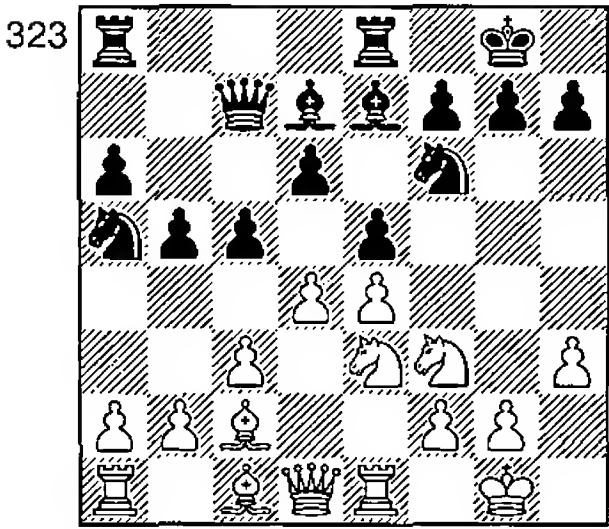


26. ♙g5 ...

White did not have much time left, so this was the best practical decision. Note the power of White's two bishops in the remainder of the game.

26... ♙xg5 27. hxg5 h4 28. ♖d3 hxg3 29. ♖xg3 ♘xd4 30. ♖ad1 c5 31. dxc6 ♘xc6 32. ♖e4 ♖ac8 33. ♖xd8+ ♘xd8 34... ♖f5 ♖a8 35. ♖e8+ ♘h7 36. cx5b f6 37. ♖c7 ♘e6 38. ♖xa8 ♘xc7 39. ♖xa7 ♘xb5 40. ♖d7 fxg5 41. a4 1-0

No. 104: A New System, Part I



Q. Evaluate the move 14...g6.

14... g6

This interesting plan became known as the Yugoslav System, because it was popularized by Yugoslav grandmasters Gligorić and Matanović. In the game **Fischer–Sho-cron** (Mar del Plata 1959), Black prepares to transfer the dark-squared bishop to g7 where it can guard e5. The move also limits the scope of White’s c2-bishop in case of a knight trade on d5.

15. dxe5 dxe5

The pawn exchange signals White’s intention to use d5. Another possibility was the quiet move 15. ♖d2, when White can either exchange on e5 or close the center with d4-d5.

16. ♖h2 ...

The reader might ask how this maneuver is connected with the weakness of d5. The truth of the matter is that it is useful to eliminate the defender of this point – the f6-knight.

16 ... ♖ad8

17. ♖f3 ♖e6

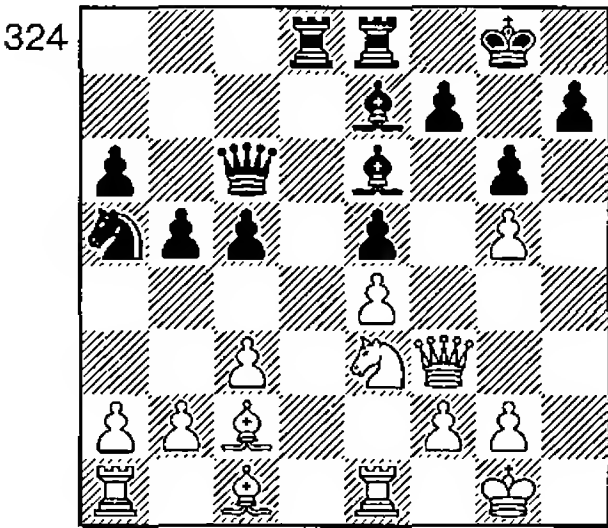
Black can deter White’s knight maneuver only by weakening his kingside with 17...h5. This would be equivalent to putting out fire with gasoline.

18. ♖hg4 ♖xg4

19. hxg4 ♖c6

20. g5 ...

White tries to improve on Boleslavsky–Tal, which continued 20. ♖g3 f6 21. g5 and is analyzed in our next example. White’s idea is to free the g4 square for his knight in case of ...♖a5-c4.



20 ... ♖c4

Let’s look at the reason why White offered a pawn sacrifice and why Black declined it. 20...♖xg5 is fundamentally important for evaluating this variation. Fischer analyzed 21. ♖d5! ♖xc1 (21...♖xd5 22. ♖xg5) 22. ♖f6+ ♖h8! (the best continuation; after 22...♖f8 23. ♖ac1 ♖e7 24. ♖xh7+ ♖g8 25. ♖cd1! ♖a8 26. ♖f6+ ♖g7 27. ♖d5 ♖xd5 28. ♖xd5, White has an edge) 23. ♖axc1 (in case of 23. ♖xe8 ♖g5 24. ♖f6 ♖c4, Black has active play as compensation) 23...♖f8 24. ♖g3 ♖c7! 25. ♖g5 ♖g7, when White can either pursue the attack by 26. f4 or 26. ♖e3, or force a draw by 26. ♖h5+.

21. ♖ ♖xg4

Black cannot allow the knight to reach f6. However, now White gets the bishop pair and can organize an attack on the h-file.

22. ♖xg4 ♞b6

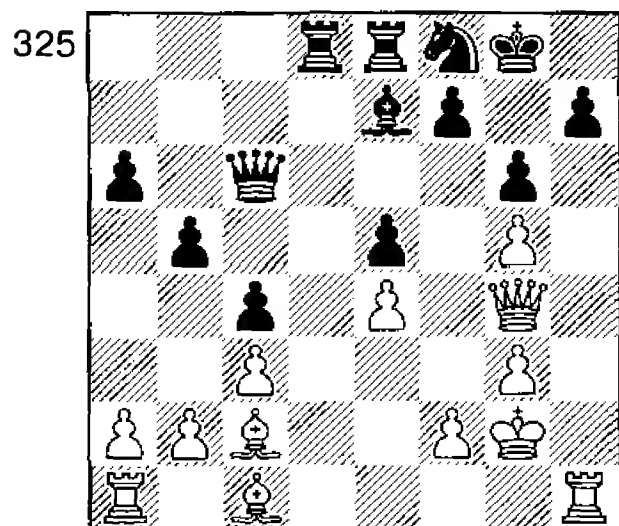
Black plans to redeploy the knight to the kingside for defense and discourages the advance a2-a4, which would allow White to bring his light-squared bishop back into play.

23. g3 c4

Black is up to the task and continues to prevent a2-a4. Worse was 23...♞d7 24. a4 b4 25. cxb4 cxb4 26. ♔b3, when the bishop can act decisively on the a2-g8 diagonal. This is a good example of the thrust-and-parry of ideas in a chess battle.

24. ♔g2 ♞d7

25. ♖h1 ♞f8



Calm has come to the kingside, so now White focuses his attention on the queenside.

26. b4 ...

If 26. b3, then 26...b4.

26 ... ♖e6

27. ♖e2 a5

28. bxa5 ♖a6

29. ♕e3 ♖xa5

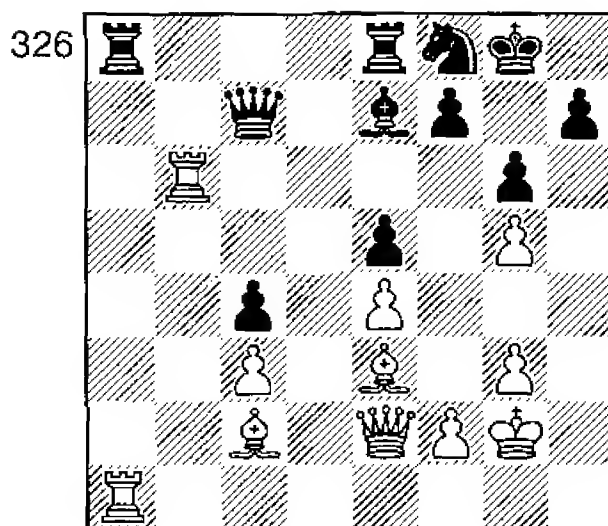
30. a4 ♖a8

31. axb5 ♖xb5

31...♖xc3 was more active. If 32. ♖a1, then 32...♕a3. And 31...♖xa1? 32. ♖xa1 ♖xa1 33. ♖xc4! cannot be recommended.

32. ♖hb1 ♖c6

33. ♖b6 ♖c7



34. ♖ba6 ♖xa6

35. ♖xa6 ...

As a result of his maneuvers, White finally gains control of the a-file.

35 ... ♖c8

36. ♖g4 ♞e6

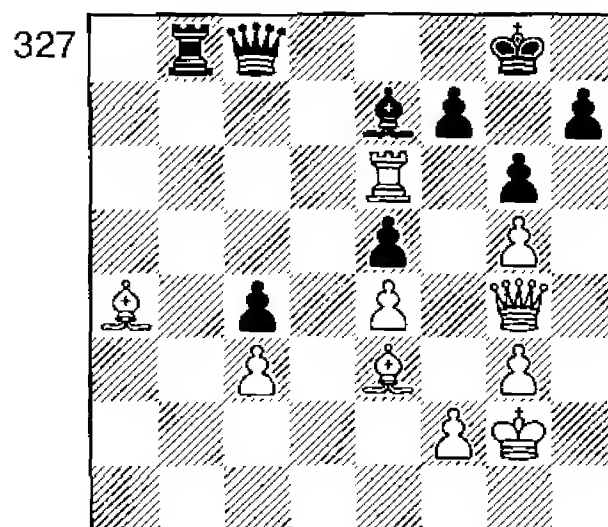
37. ♕a4 ♖b8

38. ♖c6 ♖d8?

Black has stood firm until now and could have held on with 38...♖d7. However, both players aspired to this position, but one of them miscalculated.

39. ♖xe6 ♖c8

The natural move. 39...fxe6 40. ♖xe6+ ♕f8 41. ♖xe5 does not suit Black.

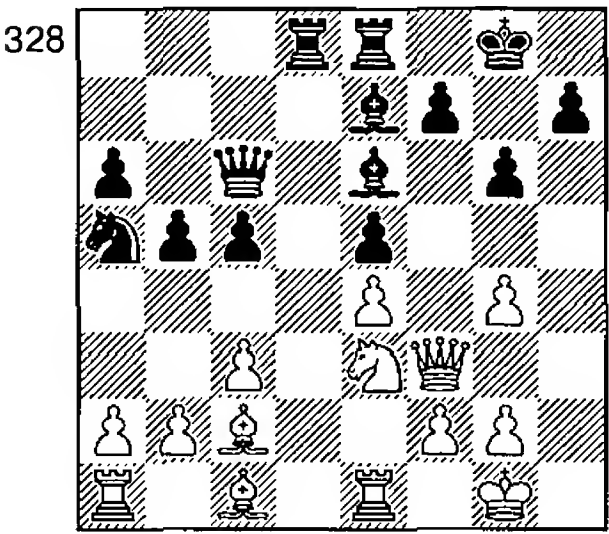


40. ♖d7!

1-0

It is the light-squared bishop that delivers the decisive blow after all. White's great efforts to activate it were not in vain. Shocron missed that on 40...♖xd7 there follows 41. ♖xg6+ and Black drops the queen. Again we see the importance of tactical training! A player's practical skill depends directly on his willingness to work hard at self-improvement and develop his technique.

No. 105: A New System, Part II



Q. Suggest a continuation for White.

In the game **Boleslavsky–Tal** (USSR Championship 1957), White has shown his intention of fighting for the d5 square by exchanging Black's f6-knight. At the same time, he watches the opponent's weakened kingside and, as we have seen, he has the option of advancing with g4-g5.

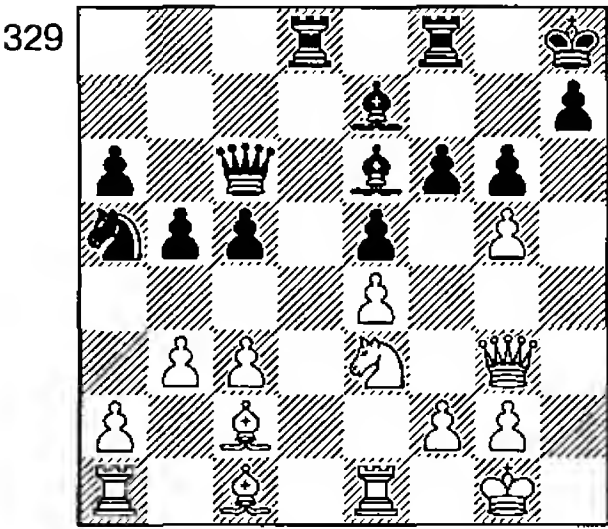
20. ♖g3 f6

If Black defended the e5-pawn by 20...♖c7, there could follow 21. ♘f5!; and 20...♗f6 allows White a direct attack by 21. g5 ♗g7 22. ♖h4 threatening ♜e3-f5.

21. g5! ♔h8

Black defends against the threatened ♜e3-f5.

22. b3 ♖f8



23. ♘d5! ...

White's infiltration on d5 is connected with a positional pawn sacrifice. As a result, White quickly completes his development, his bishop becomes active, and he starts an attack on the numerous weaknesses in Black's camp.

23... ♗xd5

This is forced, as the threats of 24. ♜xe7 and 24. gxf6 are too strong.

24. exd5 ♖xd5

25. gxf6 ♗xf6

26. ♗h6 ♖fe8

27. ♗e4 ♖e6

28. ♖f3 ♖e7

Black would like to trade dark-squared bishops, but the immediate 28... ♗g5 didn't work because of 29. ♗xg5 ♖f8 30. ♖e3.

29. ♖ad1 ...

White wishes to exchange major pieces because Black's knight is out of play. Only now do we see the purpose behind the subtle move 22. b3.

29 ... ♗g7

30. ♗e3 ♖f8

31. ♖h3 ♗g8

32. ♖g4 ...

White improves his position by constantly creating small tactical threats.

32 ... ♙f6

33. ♖xd8 ♖xd8

34. ♖d1 ♙b7

There was nothing better. Black exchanges light-squared bishops at the cost of a pawn.

35. ♙xb7 ♖xd1+

Otherwise, Black sheds the e5-pawn.

36. ♖xd1 ♖xb7

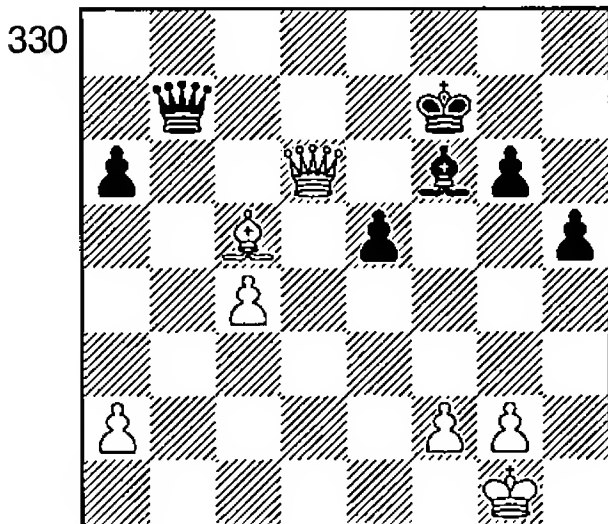
37. ♖d6 ♙f7

38. ♙xc5 h5

This move is useful in queen or pawn endings. Besides which, it is wise to defend against the mate threats that could result from, say, 38...♖e7 39. ♖d5+ ♖e6 40. ♖b7+ ♙g8 41. ♖b8+.

39. c4 bxc4

40. bxc4 ...



40 ... ♖b1+?

This was the infamous last move before the time control (it was 40 moves in 2½ hours), when mistakes often occur. After 40...e4, Black has good chances to defend.

41. ♙h2 ♖b7

Black could not play 41...♖xa2 because of the mate threats after 42. ♖f8+ ♙e6 43. ♖e8+. Therefore he is com-

pelled to lose an important tempo and return the queen to b7.

42. ♙e3 e4

43. c5 ♙e7

44. ♖b6! ♖d5

44...♖xb6 drops a piece after 45. cxb6 ♙d6+ 46. g3 ♙e6 47. b7 ♙b8 48. ♙f4.

45. c6 ♙d6+

46. g3 h4!

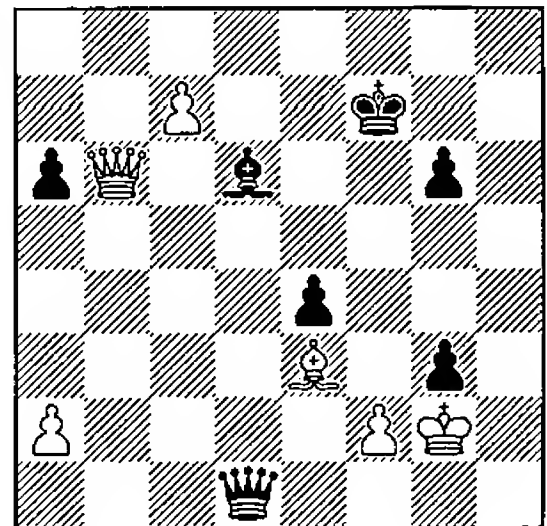
Black seeks to destroy White's pawns. Other moves lead to a quick demise; for example, 46...♖e5 47. ♖b7+ ♙f6 48. ♖d7 ♖e6 49. ♙d4+ ♙f5 50. ♖d8.

47. c7 hxg3+

48. ♙g2! ♖d1

After 48...gxf2 49. c8 ♖f1 ♖ 50. ♙xf1 ♖d1+ 51. ♙f2 ♖f3+ 52. ♙e1, the white king gets away from the checks.

331



49. ♖xd6! ...

After 49. c8 ♖?, Black gives perpetual check.

49 ... ♖xd6

50. c8 ♖ gxh2

51. ♖b7+ ♙e6

Black would like to bring his king to a8, because after a queen trade White cannot win the ending with a dark-squared bishop.

52. ♖xe4+ ♙d7

53. ♖b7+ ♙e6

54. ♖b3+ ...

White defends the a2-pawn and the e3-bishop with check. He was not afraid of 54...♗d5 because he will play 55. ♖f2 and after 55...♗b3, Black doesn't have time to exchange queenside pawns.

54 ... ♔d7
55. ♖xf2 ♗h2+
56. ♖f3 ♗h3+
57. ♖e4 ♗f5+
58. ♖d4 ♔c6

After 58...♗f6+, the white king will soon escape the checks.

59. ♖c3 ♗e5+
60. ♖c2 ♗e4+
61. ♖c1 ♔d7

After 61...♗h1+ 62. ♔b2 ♗h2+ 63. ♖a3 ♗d6+ 64. ♔a4, there are no more checks and White's king is active.

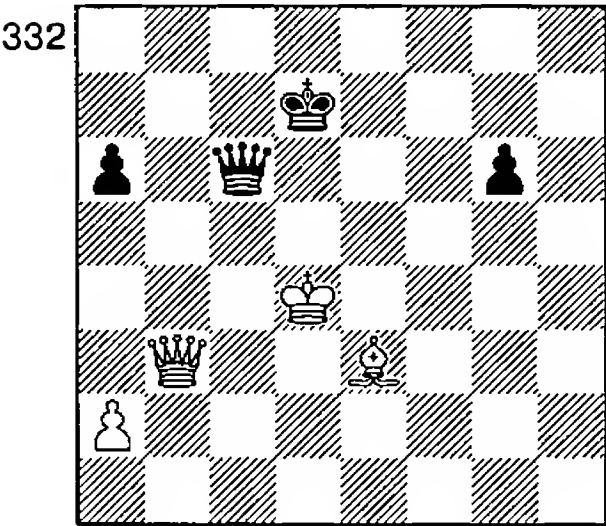
62. ♖d2 ♗g2+
63. ♖d3 ♗c6

Black defends his pawns and does not let the white king through to the queenside.

64. ♔d4 ♗f6+
65. ♖c4 ♗c6+
66. ♖d3 ♗b5+

This allows White to make the king more active, but Black has no useful moves to make.

67. ♖d4 ♗c6



68. ♗f4 ...

Now the bishop is on the important diagonal.

68 ... ♗f6+
69. ♖e3 ♗c6
70. ♖d4 ♗f6+
71. ♗e5 ...

This position could have appeared two moves earlier, but the clock was again a factor.

71... ♗f2+

White has considerably improved the placement of his pieces. Now 71... ♗c6 is impossible because of 72. ♗d5, when White easily wins the ending as Black's king cannot reach the corner in time.

72. ♖d5 ♗f7+
73. ♖c5 ♗e7+
74. ♖d4 ♗h4+
75. ♖d5 ♗h1+
76. ♔c5 ♗c1+
77. ♔b4 ...

77. ♔b6 was bad because of 77... ♗c6, when White loses the bishop.

77 ... ♗c6
78. ♗f7+ ♔c8
79. ♗f8+ ♔d7
80. ♗c5 ...

White wants to either exchange pieces on c5 or push the enemy queen from c6.

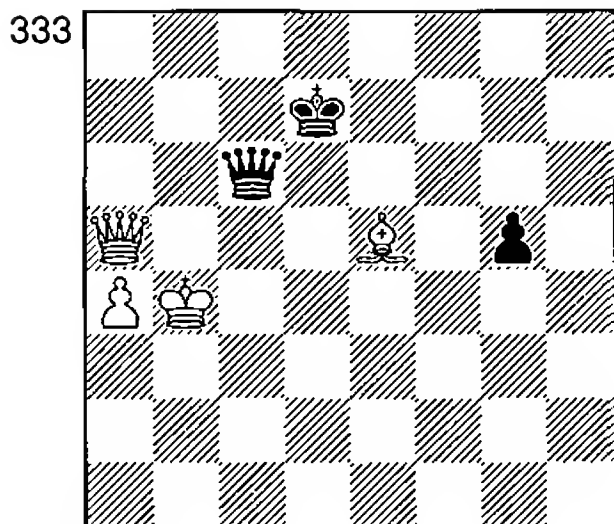
80 ... g5

After 80...♗e4+, there follows 81. ♖a5 ♗e1+ 82. ♖xa6 ♗e2+ 83. ♗b5+.

81. a4 a5+

Desperation. After 81...g4, there follows 82. ♗d4+ ♔e6 83. ♖a5 and so on.

82. ♗xa5 ...

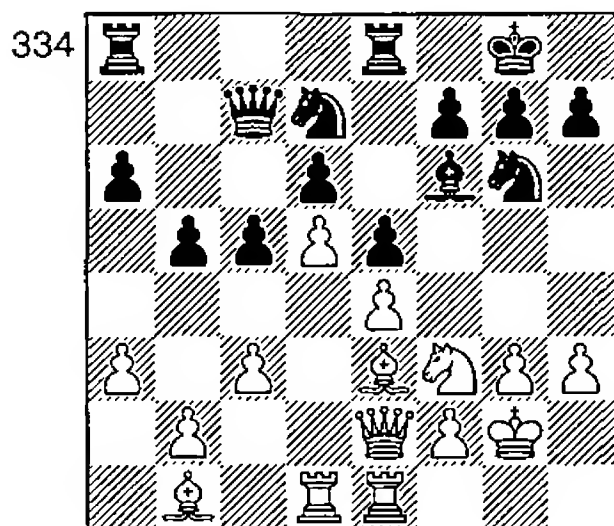


The rest is clear.

82... ♖e4+ 83. ♙a3 ♖e3+ 84. ♜c3 ♖c1+ 85. ♜b3 ♖b1+ 86. ♜a3 ♖c1+ 87. ♜b4 ♖b1+ 88. ♜c5 ♖g1+ 89. ♜b5 g4 90. ♜a6 g3 91. ♜d5+ ♜e7 92. ♜b7+ ♜e8 93. ♜b8+ 1-0

Black resigned, as the queens will be exchanged on the next move. This game was extraordinarily instructive at every stage. It is especially useful to become acquainted with the winning endgame method Boleslavsky used. Incidentally, this was Tal's only defeat in this tournament.

No. 106: Prophylaxis



Q. Suggest a plan for both sides.

In this position from the game **Lasker–Burn** (St. Petersburg 1909), the cen-

ter is closed, so both players should look to play on the wings. White should organize an attack on the kingside, where he can advance the g- and h-pawns and pry open lines. Meanwhile, Black must act on the queenside and advance the a- and b-pawns. However, he will first regroup his forces to thwart White on the kingside. Nimzowitsch dubbed this method “prophylaxis.”

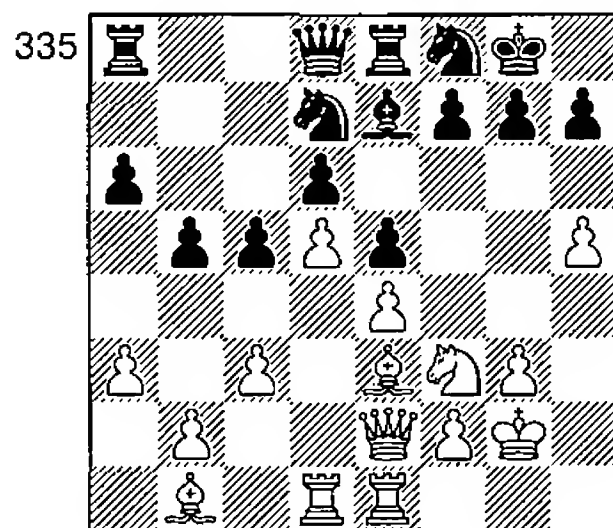
23 ... ♖d8!

24. h4 ♙e7

25. h5 ...

An inaccuracy. White should advance the g-pawn without the preliminary h4-h5. Now Black can use the g5 square to stop White's plan. However, for our purposes this is an instructive error, and it is best to learn from the mistakes of others. In fact, present-day positional theory is built on the “bones” of our predecessors.

25 ... ♘g5



26. ♖h1 h6

27. ♖dg1 ♘h7

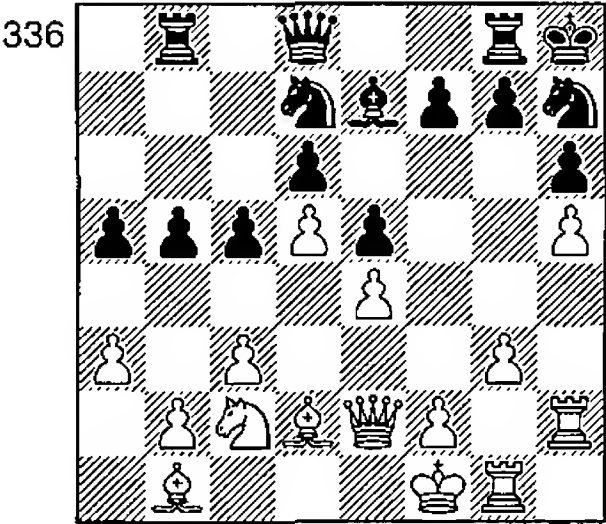
28. ♙f1 ♜h8

29. ♖h2 ♜g8

Black's last several moves were aimed at bolstering his defenses. As soon as White plays g3-g4, Black will suppress the attack by ... ♘h7-g5. Now Lasker

begins to practice prophylaxis and prevents the break ...b5-b4 before advancing further on the kingside.

30. ♖e1 ♜b8
31. ♖c2 a5
32. ♙d2 ...



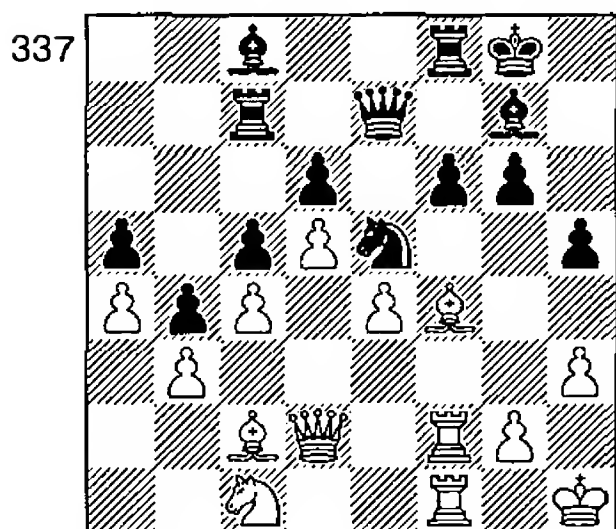
So far this has been an excellent example of how attack on one flank can be combined with defense on the opposite wing. In the further course of the game, White proved successful.

- 32... ♙f6 33. f3 ♖b6 34. ♜f2 ♜c8 35. ♙g2 ♙d7 36. ♙h1 ♖e7 37. ♜h2 ♜b7
38. ♜f1 ♜e8 39. ♖e3 ♖g8 40. f4 ♙d8
41. ♜f3 c4 42. a4 ♙b6 43. axb5 ♜xb5
44. ♖f5 ♙d7 45. ♙g4 f6 46. ♙c2 ♙c5
47. ♜a1 ♜eb8 48. ♙c1 ♙c7 49. ♙a4 ♙b6
50. ♜g2 ♜f7 51. ♙e2 ♙a6 52. ♙c6 ♖e7
53. ♖xe7 ♜xe7 54. ♜a4 exf4 55. gxf4 f5
56. e5 ♖f6 57. ♜xc4 ♖g4 58. ♜xc5 ♙xe2
59. ♜xe2 dxc5 60. d6 ♜a7 61. e6 ♜a6
62. e7 ♖f6 63. d7 ♖xd7 64. ♙xd7 1-0

Chapter IV

Attack

No. 107: A Long-Term Advantage Makes Patient Play Possible



Q. Evaluate the diagram position with White to move.

The general assessment suggests that Black faces some difficulties. Of course, the point e5 is the pride of Black's position, but possession of one point by itself is not enough. The overall coordination between the pieces is paramount. The most important factor in this position is Black's lack of counterplay. For the moment, White doesn't even need to make direct threats, he can simply look

for ways to improve his position while Black remains passive and restricted. Let's look at what occurred in the game **Suetin–Matanović** (Belgrade 1974).

37. ♖d3 ♔e8

38. ♘xe5 fxe5?

Capturing with the f-pawn is a decisive mistake. The reason becomes clear soon.

39. ♗g5! ...

The smoke clears. Despite the symmetry and similarity of the pieces on the board, Black's position is very difficult. The white g5-bishop is especially important, as it defends the kingside and attacks the queenside. The placement of the black pawns is also vital, because if the a5-pawn were on a6 (a light square where White's bishop can't attack it), White's advantage would not be enough to win. But, as subsequent events show, simplifications are inevitable and White's bishop will be dominant in the ensuing endgame.

39... ♜cf7

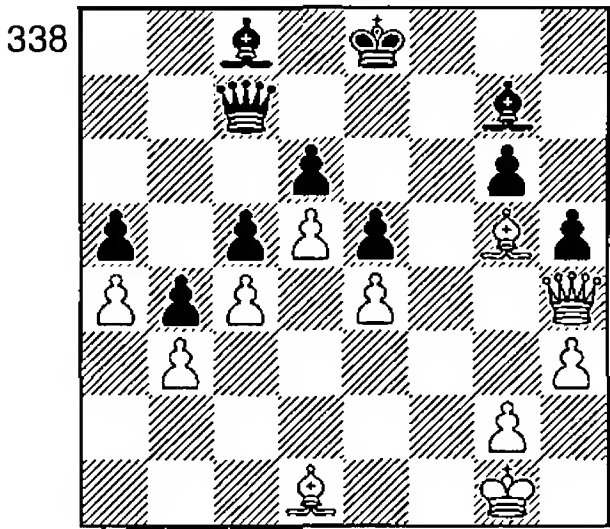
40. ♔g1 ♔d7

41. ♕d1 ♔c7

42. ♖e3 ♜xf2

The variation 42...♜f4 43. ♙xf4 exf4 44. ♜xf4 ♙d4 45. ♜xf8+ ♔g7 46. ♚xd4+ cxd4 leads to a dismal ending for Black.

43. ♜xf2 ♜f7
44. ♚g3 ♔f8
45. ♜xf7+ ♔xf7
46. ♚h4 ♔e8



47. g4! ...
Onward to the pawn ending!
47... hxg4
48. ♙xg4 ♙xg4
49. ♚xg4! ...

Here is the final finesse in this game: It is necessary to keep the pawn on the h-file. The explanation is be found in the note to move 54.

49... ♔d7

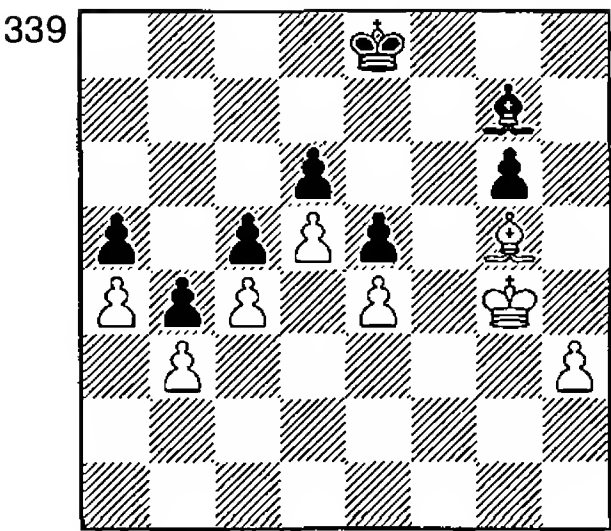
A regrettable choice, but otherwise the white queen enters Black's camp with impunity.

50. ♚xd7+ ♔xd7
51. ♙g2 ♔e8
52. ♙f3 ♔d7
53. ♔g4 ♔e8

(See Diagram 339)

54. h4 ...

The decisive phase of the game begins in which White's rook's pawn will



play a leading role by destroying Black's last rampart on the kingside and clearing an invasion route for the king.

54... ♙f8
55. h5 gxh5
56. ♔xh5 ♙g7
57. ♔g6 ♙f8

In general, having pawns on squares of the same color as their bishop is a considerable disadvantage. First, such pawns must be defended; and second, the squares of the opposite color are accessible to the opponent's king. In order to win, the attacking side usually brings about a *Zugzwang* situation.

Black's position has been dreadful since move 51. The king is fastened to d8 to stop the white bishop from invading. What can we do but note the move ...a6-a5?!. If the pawn were on a6, Black could adequately prevent the incursion of the enemy king.

58. ♔f6 ♙e7
59. ♔f5 ♙f8

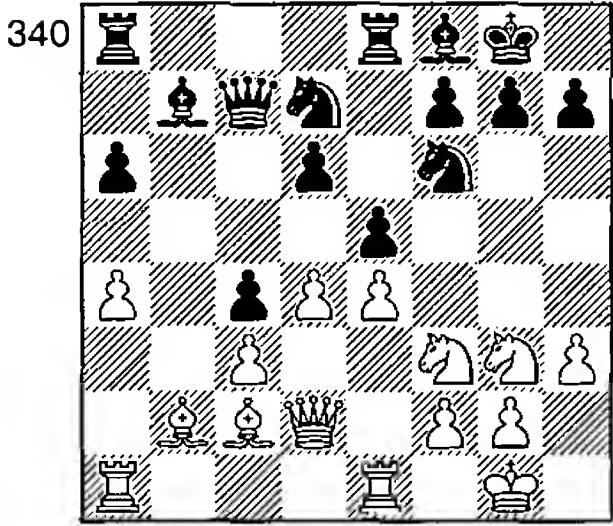
The pawn ending is hopeless for Black. The point is that once White takes care of the d6-pawn, he will have two squares for the attack – e6 and e7, and because Black is deprived of c6, he cannot mount a defense.

60. ♔g6! ...

60. ♖e6 is premature because the tactical trick 60...♙e7! prolongs the game. Now Black is in *Zugzwang*, and so he resigns.

1-0

No. 108: Sweat the Details



Q. In the diagram position, would you prefer a) 20...g6; or b) 20...d5?

20... g6?

Black's previous move in the game **Keres–Gligorić** (Zürich 1959) was ...c5-c4. With it he released the tension in the center, but this helped only White. Advancing the g-pawn is a standard move in many Ruy López positions, but in this position it is an inaccuracy that compounds Black's difficulties, as here White's dark-squared bishop can still attack the a3-f8 diagonal. It was necessary to play 20...d5, when White is only slightly better after 21. exd5 ♗xd5 22. ♙a3 ♙xa3 23. ♖xa3 ♗f4 24. ♙e4.

21. ♙a3! ...

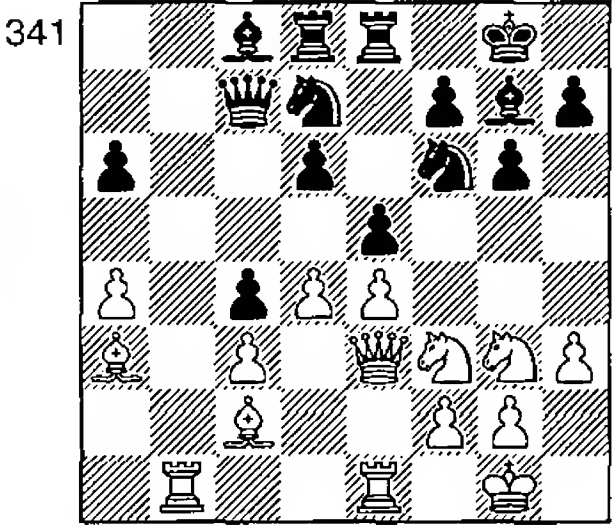
A subtle maneuver typical of the Estonian grandmaster, who often won through imperceptible and outwardly unpretentious means. Black's hasty ad-

vance of the pawn from c5 allows White to carry out a complex strategic plan beginning with the exchange of dark-squared bishops and followed by a kingside attack.

21... ♖ad8

Now 21...d5 is unprofitable as, after the exchange on f8, the weakness of the dark squares on the kingside would be fatal.

22. ♖ab1 ♙c8
23. ♗e3 ♙g7



24. dxe5! ...

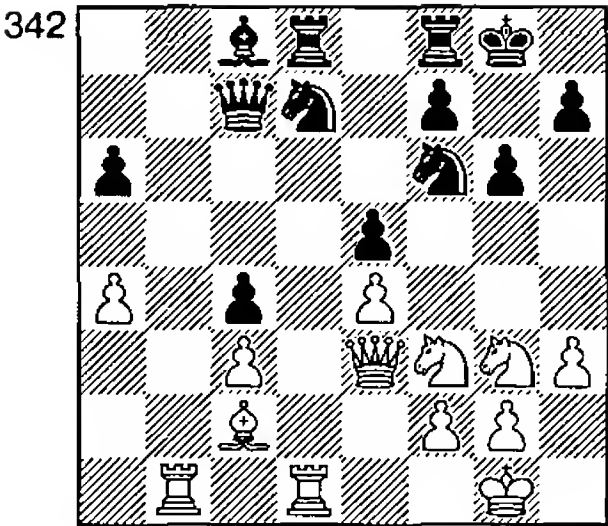
This exchange eliminates forever the possibility of ...d6-d5 and gives White strong positional pressure based on the excellent position of the bishop on a3, the weakness of the c4-pawn, and White's possession of the open d-file.

24... dxe5
25. ♖ed1 ♙f8

This weakens the black king's position, but White's bishop was too powerful. The attempt 25...♗f8 fails to 26. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 27. ♗f1, when the c4-pawn soon falls.

26. ♙xf8 ♖xf8

After 26...♗xf8, 27. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 28. ♗g5! is very strong.



27. ♔g5! ...

This very strong move cuts down on Black's possibilities and threatens an attack on the black king by 28. ♖f5. Therefore Black must prepare to play ...f7-f6.

27... ♜e8

Much to Black's regret, he doesn't have time for 27... ♜h8 intending ...♜g8, because after 28. ♖b4 the weakness of the black pawn on c4 comes into play.

28. ♔e7 ...

Of course, White cannot take the pawn on e5.

28... ♜g7

29. ♖f1 ...

Here 29. ♖e5 was bad due to 29... ♜e8. The game move prepares to transfer the knight to the excellent square e3, from where it will attack the c4-pawn and the important central square d5, as well as threaten to join the attack against the king via g4. Black answers by re-deploying his knight to f4, but it's not enough.

29... ♜e6

No one would envy Black's situation. He could drive the queen away from its active position by 29... ♜fe8, but after 30. ♖b4 and 31. ♖e3 he would lose the c4-

pawn. In the line selected in the game, Black comes under a withering attack.

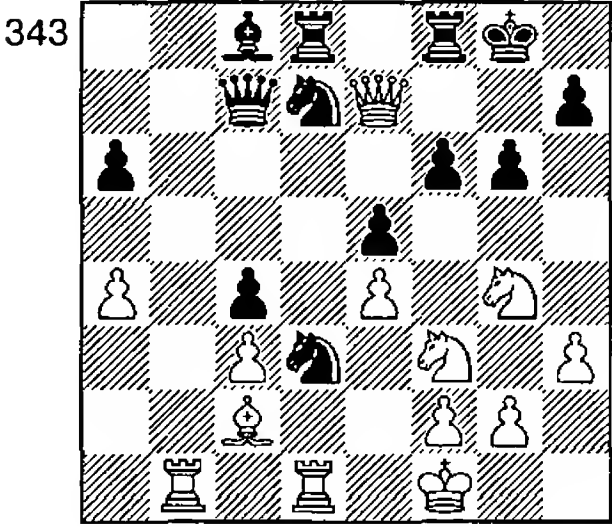
30. ♖e3 ♜f4

31. ♖f1 f6?

This seriously weakens the position, but Black lacks an acceptable alternative. He pins his hopes on his next move.

32. ♖g4! ♜d3

Both 32... ♜de8 and 32... ♜h8 are answered by 33. ♖xf6(+)!.



33. ♖xd3! ...

Black should be awfully disappointed. He had pinned his last hopes on White's being tempted by 33. ♜h6+ ♜h8 34. ♜f7+ ♜xf7 35. ♖xf7, when Black has the defense 35... ♜f8 36. ♖e7 ♜c5 37. ♖xc5 ♜7xc5. However, White had prepared the decisive combination long ago.

33... cxd3

34. ♖b3+ ♜h8

35. ♖xf6! ...

Now the remaining knight has g5 available to it.

35... ♜xf6

36. ♖g5 ♜xf2+

37. ♜g1! ...

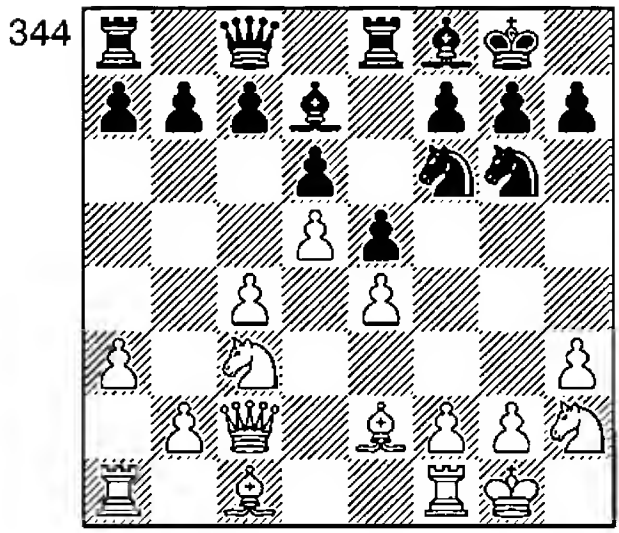
This is much simpler than accepting the sacrifice.

37... ♜f1+

38. ♜h2 1-0

No. 109:

Play on the Correct Wing



Q. In the diagram position, should White play on the kingside or the queenside?

14. f4? ...

In the game **Tartakover—Em. Lasker** (New York 1924), White makes a serious mistake in evaluating the position. He should play on the queenside, where he already has a space advantage. With 14. b4, he could prepare the c4-c5 break. Then Black's most natural continuation is 14... ♗f4, but after 15. ♕xf4 exf4 16. ♖f3 Black is constrained by the defense of the f4-pawn and would have to watch the breaks c4-c5 and e4-e5. He might have the bishop pair, but the clerics would not be very active.

14... exf4
15. ♕xf4 ♖xf4
16. ♖xf4 ♕e7!

The result of White's diversion is that he has created a backward pawn for himself on e4, given the e5 square to Black, activated the black e8-rook, handed the advantage of the bishop pair to his opponent, and voluntarily surrendered his defender of the dark

squares at the very moment that they require special attention. All of this together gives Black a long-term advantage.

With Lasker's last move, he begins to regroup his forces and completely neutralizes White's piece activity on the kingside. He is going to place the knight on e5 and the bishop on g5. Now the two black bishops start to play an active role in the game.

17. ♖af1 ♖f8

Black's move should not be regarded as merely defensive. Yes, Black strengthens f7. But at the same time, he vacates e8 for the light-squared bishop. In turn, the bishop opens up d7 for the knight, which goes to the center square e5 that White ceded when he played 14. f4. A long but clear chain of logic!

18. ♔d3 ♕e8

19. ♔g3 ♔d8

Black reinforces f6 and arranges for the dark-squared bishop to go to g5.

20. ♗d1 ♖d7

21. ♖e3 ...

White overestimates the strength of his position. By playing 21. ♖f3 or 21. h4, he could avoid losing material. But the defects in his position remain and after 21... ♕f6 he would stand worse.

21... ♕g5

22. ♖g4 ...

White has a specific sacrifice in mind.

22... f6!

23. ♔f2 h5

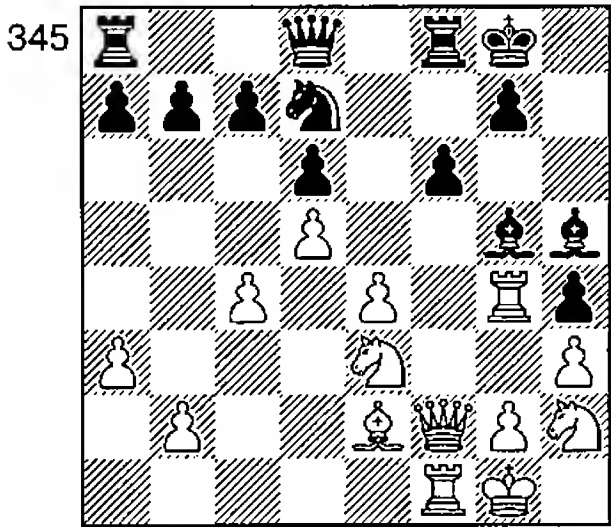
24. ♖g3 h4!

Black steps around the trap. The tables would turn after 24... ♕h4? 25. ♖xg7+! with very good winning chances. Once again we see that com-

bination and position play are not isolated elements. They supplement each other; they are interconnected and interact.

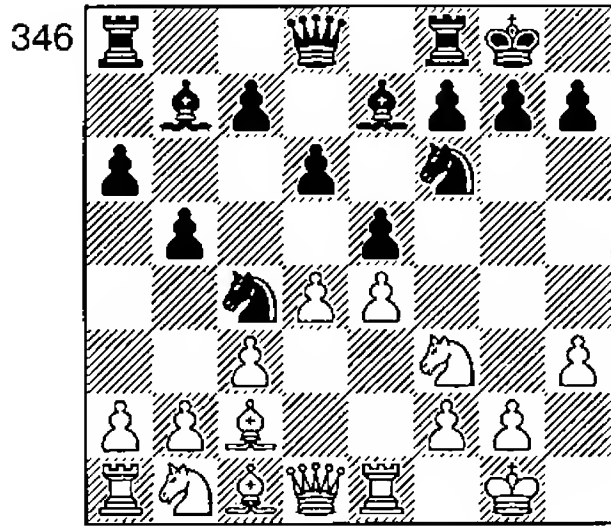
25. ♖g4 ♙h5

This move decides the game. Black was implacable.



26. ♘f5 ♙xg4 27. ♘xg4 ♖e8 28. ♙f3 ♘e5 29. ♘xe5 ♖xe5 30. ♘h4 ♙xh4 31. ♖xh4 f5! 32. exf5 ♖xf5 33. ♖e1 ♖xb2 34. ♙g4 ♖d4+ 35. ♙h2 ♖af8 36. ♖e7 ♖f4+ 37. ♙h1 ♖e5 38. ♖xe5 dxe5 39. ♖xc7 e4! 40. ♖e7 ♖f6! 41. ♖xb7 ♖a1+ 42. ♙h2 ♖e5+ 43. ♙g1 ♖b8 44. ♖d7 ♖b1+ 45. ♙f2 e3+ 46. ♙e2 ♖b2+ 47. ♙e1 ♖c3+ 48. ♙f1 ♖c1+ 0-1

No. 110: The Shifting Offensive



Q. In the diagram position, suggest a plan for White.

12. ♙e2! ...

With this move, White launches an attack on Black's most vulnerable point: b5. In the game **Suetin–Taimanov** (USSR Championship 1958), Black found it difficult to defend against this plan. Note that the stereotyped 12. b3 ♘b6 13. ♘bd2 ♘fd7 14. ♘fl c5 would not create any difficulties for Black.

12... ♖e8

If Black had figured out his opponent's intentions, he would have played 12...♘d7 13. a4 c6 14. b3 ♘4b6 with a passive but strong position. But GM Taimanov has been a Sicilian Defense specialist throughout his career, and he finds such positions counterintuitive. Hence Black tries to establish counterplay in the center, but it does not bring success.

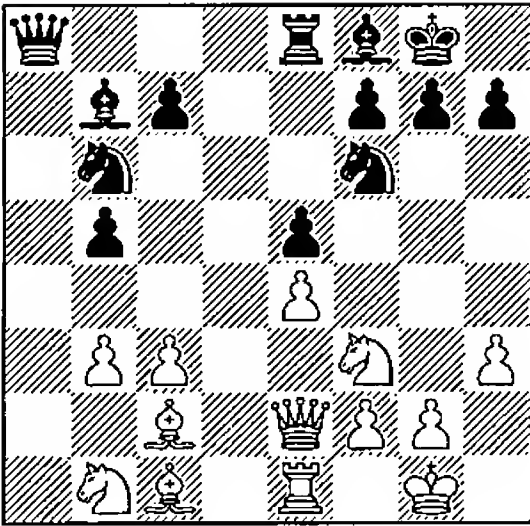
As an aside, taking into account the psychological aspects of the game increases the probability of success in tournaments. In modern terminology, playing the man and not the board can add up to 100 points to one's rating.

13. a4 ♙f8?

Black continues to misjudge the position. This move allows White to obtain a serious positional edge by force. Black should prefer 13...c6 14. b3 ♘b6, not fearing 15. dxe5 dxe5 16. ♘xe5, as after 16...♙d6 17. ♘f3 Black wins the pawn back by 17...♘xe4.

14. b3 ♘b6
15. dxe5 dxe5
16. axb5 axb5
17. ♖xa8 ♖xa8

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18.  g5! ...

Black's position is very uncomfortable. He probably only reckoned with the continuation 18. ♖xb5 ♜xe4 19. ♜xe5, when after 19...♞d6 he could get some compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

Now Black is faced with the unpleasant alternatives of either allowing the weakening of his kingside or simply dropping a pawn.

18...	c6
19. ♖xf6	gxf6
20. ♜h4	♙c8
21. ♜d2	♙h6

Black should prefer 21...♔h8, even though White's advantage is still obvious after 22. ♖f1, with the further transfer of the knight via g3 to h5.

22. ♘f5! ♖xf5

23. **exf5**  **xd2**

23...♘d5 is strongly met by 24. ♖e4,
and if 24...♔h8, then 24. ♕h5!.

24. ♖xd2 ...

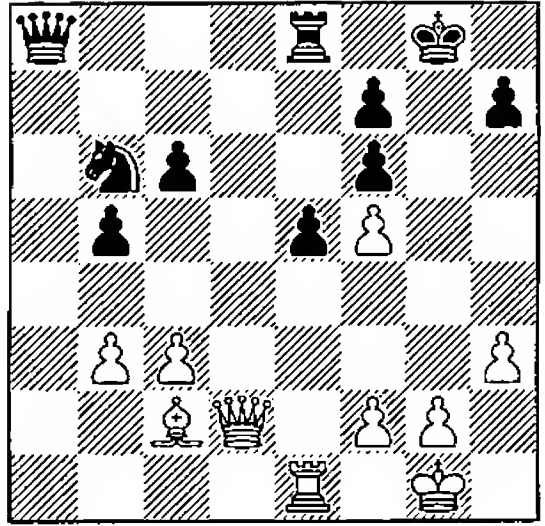
(See Diagram 348)

Despite the reduced material on the board, Black's position is lost in view of his many weaknesses. White plans to storm the kingside.

24...  **d8**

Black could try 24...♔a2 and if White attacks with 25. ♖h6, then 25...

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♔xc2 26. ♖e3 ♕xf5 27. ♖g3+ ♕g6 gives Black strong defensive chances. Therefore White would have to play 25. ♖e4 to drive the situation. In this case, White's attack cannot be parried.

25. ♖h6 ♔e7?

This gross oversight leads to immediate defeat. Black could prolong his resistance only by 25... ♖h8, though even then White could get an edge. For example, by 26. ♕e4 ♜d6 27. ♖e3 ♘d5 28. ♜d3 ♜f8 29. ♜xf8+, entering a favorable rook ending with an extra pawn.

26. ♖e4! ♜f8

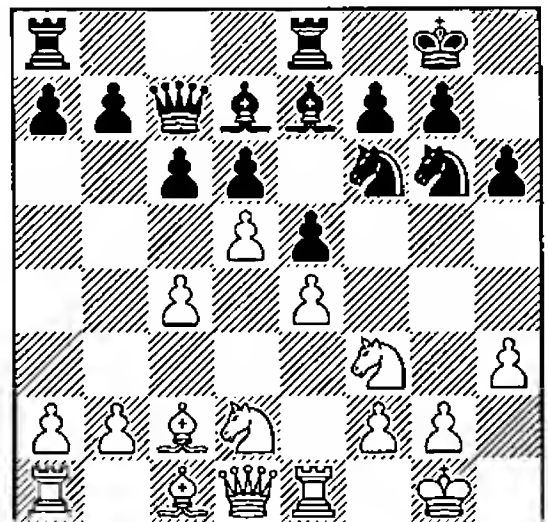
27. ♖g4+ ♗h8

28. ♔xf6+ ♔g7

29. ♔xg7#

No. 111: Strategic Redeployment

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Q. In the diagram position, what route would you select for the white knight on d2?

White can follow the “Spanish” route and place the knight on f5 via d2–f1–g3–f5, or he can play the knight to the queenside.

15. ♖b1! ...

The transfer of the knight via f1 would promise less, as the white army’s fighting potential on the queenside would be diminished. Now White fortifies his position in the center and plans an offensive with ♖c3, ♕d2, b2–b4 and so on. By the way, this maneuver features in the games of many great players. You may also recall the knight’s move to b8 in one of Chigorin’s games earlier in this book.

15.... ♕f8

Black doesn’t sense the danger. He needs to seek counterplay along the open c-file by 15...cxd5 16. cxd5, when after 16...b5! he should arrange his pieces on the queenside as follows: ...♖ec8, ...♙b7, ...♕e7–d8–b6.

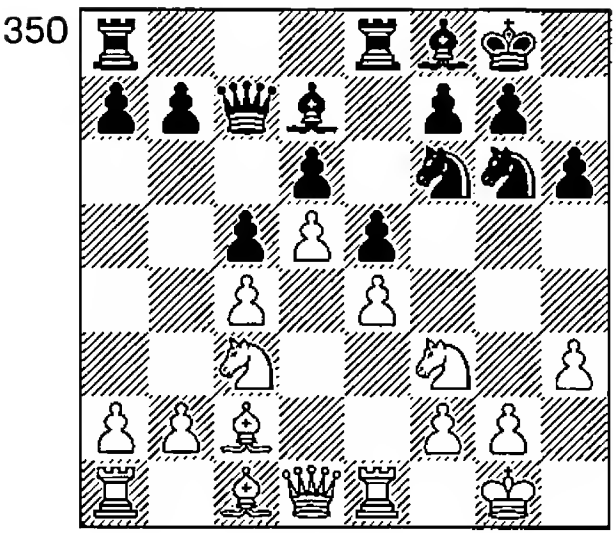
16. ♖c3 c5

This is a serious strategic error. In the game **Kasparov–Giorgadze** (USSR Championship 1979), Black opted for a poor pawn structure on the queenside. Besides, he missed White’s next move. Despite the loss of time, it would have been better to return to the plan connected with the moves 16...cxd5 17. cxd5 b5, and if 18. ♕d3, then 18...♖b8!.

(See Diagram 350)

17. ♕a4! ...

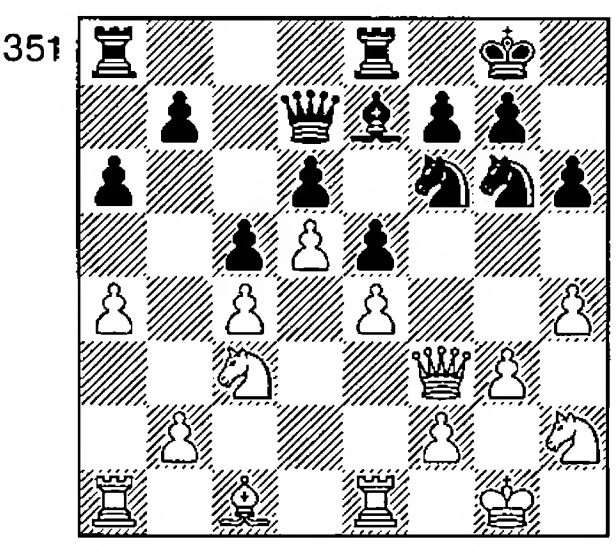
It is very good for White to exchange his bad bishop. Besides, White trades off the very bishop that Black needs for an attack on the kingside.



17... a6
18. ♕xd7 ♖xd7

It is not much better to capture with the queen, to which White could reply 19. a4, depriving Black of counterplay. We must remember that chessplayers often select plans and moves depending on their own predilections and tendencies. Here, after 18...♙xd7, Kasparov intended to play 19. a3 b5 20. ♕e3, not preventing Black from opening the queenside. In the coming battle White has more pieces.

19. g3 ♕e7 20. h4 ♖f6 21. ♖h2 ♙d7
22. a4 ♙h3 23. ♙f3 ♙d7:

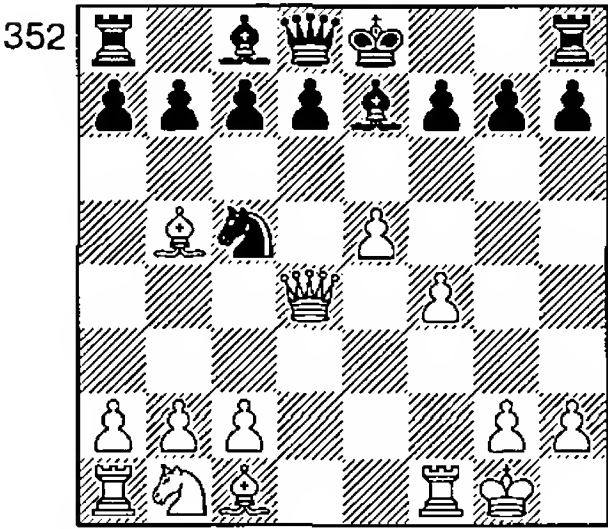


Mired in severe time pressure, Black puts all thoughts of counterplay out of his mind. He opts for passive defense, relying on the strength of his pawn chain. However, Black’s space is ex-

tremely limited, while White's army is much more mobile.

24. a5 ♘f8 25. ♔d2 ♖ec8 26. ♘f1 ♘g4 27. ♘a4 ♔d8 28. ♖ec1 ♗ab8 29. b4 cxb4 30. ♔4b4 h5 31. ♘b6 ♔xb6 32. axb6 ♗e7 33. ♗a3 ♖d8 34. f3 ♘h6 35. c5 dxc5 36. ♔xc5 ♗f6 37. ♔g2 ♖e8 38. ♔e3 ♘d7 39. ♗ab1 ♗e7 1-0

No. 112: The Advancing Pawn Phalanx



A. Define the further course of the game. Support your conclusions with variations.

B. Is 9...b6 good for Black?

White has a better position based on his obvious advantage in space. By way of explanation let me digress.

The reader well knows that the pawn is the weakest fighting unit, but paradoxically this is what gives it its strength. As a rule, any piece that is attacked by a lowly pawn is compelled to retreat, lest the opponent gain a material advantage. Thus, a square controlled by a pawn is often inaccessible to enemy pieces, unless of course there is an overriding tactic. The further a player advances his

pawns, the more he decreases his opponent's space, while also increasing his own forces' mobility. So if far-advanced pawns have the support of their pieces, an advantage in space can become a decisive factor in the position.

Another important aspect of the diagram position is that White's pieces are well coordinated. In particular, White threatens to create a mobile pawn phalanx after f4-f5.

Having control over a complex of strategically connected squares is a typical example of coordinated play. Strategically connected squares are any squares that are important for the realization of strategic plans, be it a storming of the royal fortress or the utilization of a weak color complex. When the pawns coordinate to control several adjacent squares along a rank, it is called a phalanx. In *Lasker's Manual of Chess* it is written: "Steinitz added to the rules of Philidor: *A phalanx must advance so as to be able to resume the shape of the phalanx again until its advance is needed no more.*"

9... b6?

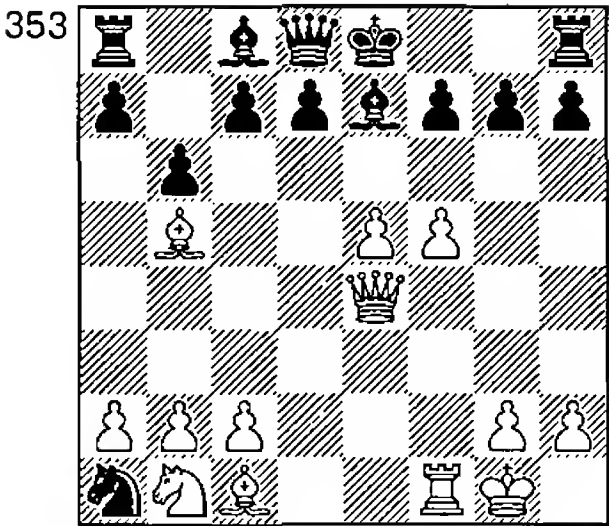
It was necessary to stop White's threat by 9...0-0. If 10. f5, then 10...d6 and White's phalanx collapses. On 10. b4 ♘e6 11. ♗e4 it is possible to slow down the advance by 11...f5.

However, Black is distracted by a tactical idea and mistakenly allows White to carry out the threat and fix his advantage.

10. f5! ♘b3

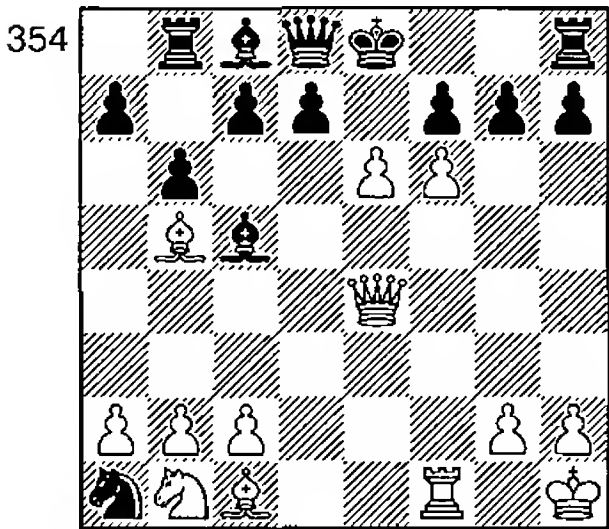
The point of Black's previous move is that White can't play 11. axb3 because of 11...♔c5.

11. ♗e4 ♔xa1



12. f6! ...
White is not tempted by the rook on a8.

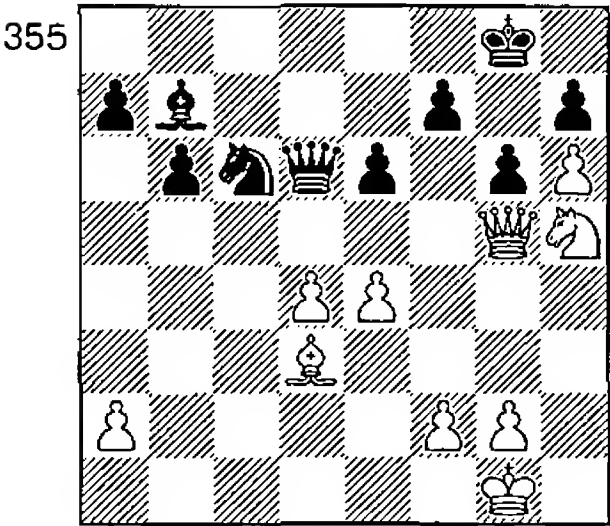
12... ♖c5+
13. ♔h1 ♜b8
14. e6! ...



The phalanx has reached the sixth rank and the fight is over. Black cannot castle now because of 15. e7 ♔e8 16. ♙d3 g6 17. ♚h4 with a decisive attack, and on 14...fxe6 defeat will follow after 15. fxg7 ♖g8 16. ♚xe6+, as in the game **Steinitz–Bird** (London 1866).

The reader should be persuaded of the importance of harmonious piece coordination. This is a major element in the middlegame, especially in conjunction with a direct attack on the king.

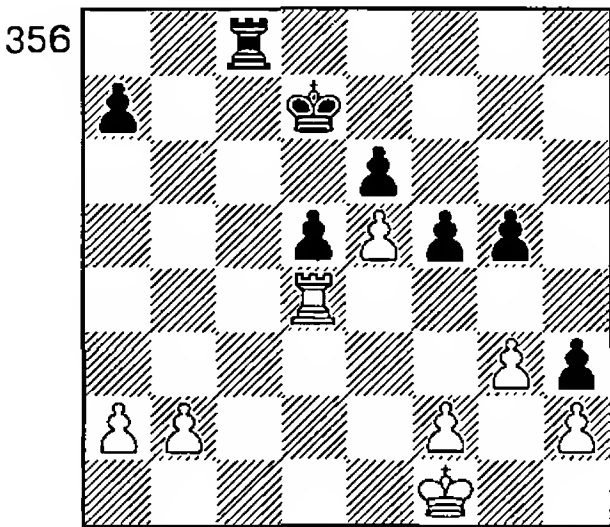
No. 113:
The Nail in the Fortress Wall



Q. In the diagram position, how should White make use of the far advanced h-pawn?

Advancing the king's rook's pawn usually pursues twin goals: to create a stronghold for a piece on g5 (g4) or to open the file for a rook. Yet, sometimes the pawn is advanced to the sixth (third) rank to create various checkmate or promotion threats. This nail hammered into the wall of the enemy fortress often yields results.

Here is another useful example, from the game **Margulis–Ketslakh** (USSR 1972):



In the above position Black creates a protected passed pawn on h3: 1...♖c1+ 2. ♔e2 ♜h1 3. ♜a4 ♜xh2 4. ♜xa7+ ♔c8 5. ♜a8+ ♔b7 6. ♜e8 ♜h1 7. ♜xe6 ♜b1 8. ♜e8 ♜xb2+ 9. ♔e3 g4 and Black has an advantage.

Returning to the position in Diagram 103, from the game **Knaak–Hartston** (Tallinn 1979), White takes advantage of the strength of the h6-pawn at once.

25. ♘f6+ ♔h8

26. e5 ♜d8

It turns out that 26...♜xd4? doesn't work because of the beautiful maneuver 27. ♘d7, blocking the queen from returning to d8.

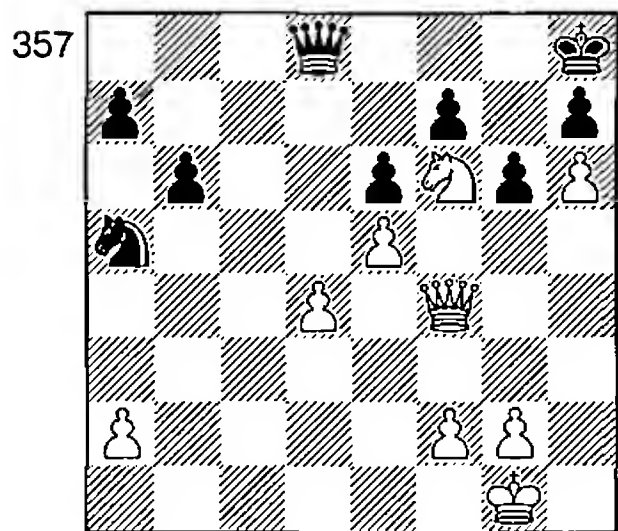
27. ♘e4 ...

White brings in the light-squared bishop and prepares the advance d4–d5.

27... ♜a5

28. ♙xb7 ♜xb7

29. ♚f4 ♜a5



30. d5! ...

This is the first in a series of vigorous moves that destroys the black king's fortress.

30... exd5

31. ♘xd5 ♔g8

32. e6! fxe6

33. ♚e5 ♜f8

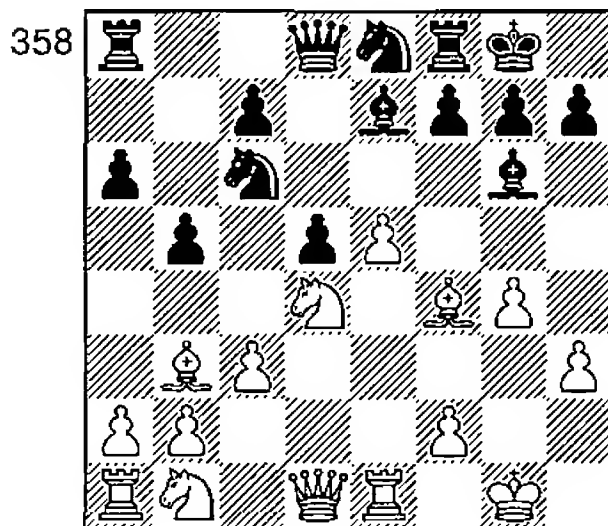
34. ♚xe6+ ♔h8

35. ♘e7 1-0

Black resigned, as mate is imminent.

No. 114:

An Attack Left Undisturbed



Q. In the diagram position, which is better, 14...♘xd4 or 14...♘a5?

In the game **Honfi–Kholmov** (Sukhumi 1972), White has loosened the pawn cover around his king. Now it is time for Black to choose a further course of action. In particular, it is necessary to decide which pieces to exchange and which to leave on the board. José Raúl Capablanca once joked that, “it’s not difficult to play chess at all. It is necessary only to be able to choose the right piece and to put it on the right square!”

14...♘xd4 15. cxd4 looks like a logical continuation, as it eliminates White’s centralized knight (15. ♚xd4 achieves nothing following ...c7–c6 and ...♘e8–c7). Black could then take advantage of White’s weakened kingside by 15...f5 16. ♘c3 c6 17. ♚d2 fxg4 18. hxg4 ♘c7, and if 19. e6, then 19... ♘d6 or 19...♜f6. Of course, this variation is

not the whole story, but it's clear that Black would obtain good counterplay by trading knights.

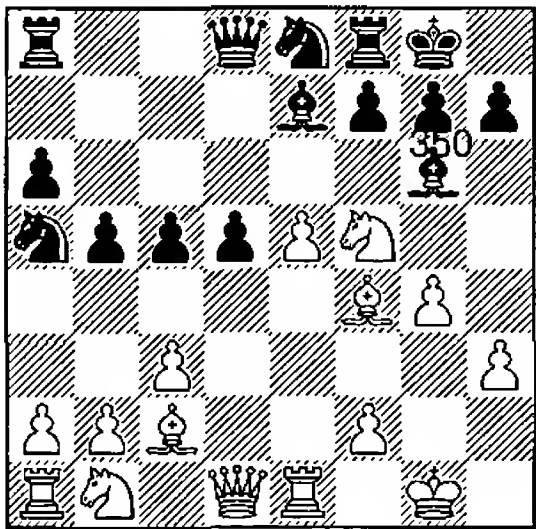
14... ♞a5?

Kholmov dooms the knight to the role of mere spectator. The knight will not move from this square for the rest of the game!

15. ♖c2 c5

In difficult positions, chessplayers often resort to exchanges, figuring that fewer pieces mean fewer threats. Here Black should have followed this policy and traded off his passive light-squared bishop. Therefore 15... ♖xc2 16. ♙xc2 c5 17. ♞f5 ♞c6 was mandatory.

16. ♞f5! ...



The white knight is excellently posted thanks to its close proximity to the black king. This is always dangerous for the defender.

16... ♞c7

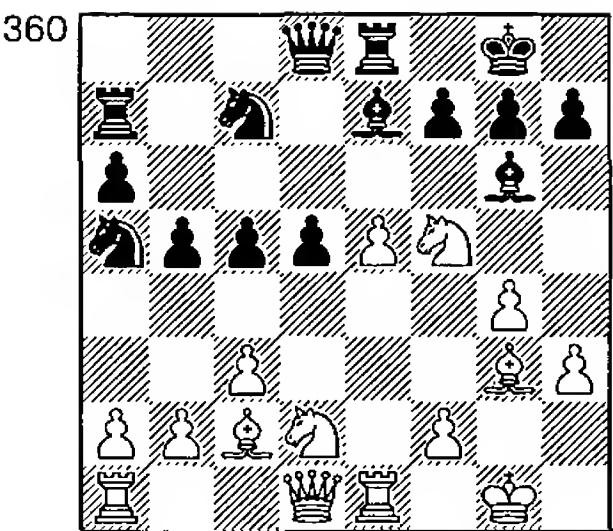
Black protects the d-pawn, which would be left hanging after trades on e7 and g6.

17. ♖g3 ...

White prepares to attack by advancing the h-pawn.

17... ♖e8

18. ♞d2 ♖a7



19. h4! ...

A typical sacrifice, allowing White to coordinate his pieces and attack with tempo. In particular, now if 19... ♖xf5 20. gxf5 ♖xh4 21. f6 ♖xg3 22. ♙h5 h6 23. fxg3 ♞e6 24. ♖f3, White has a strong attack.

19... h6

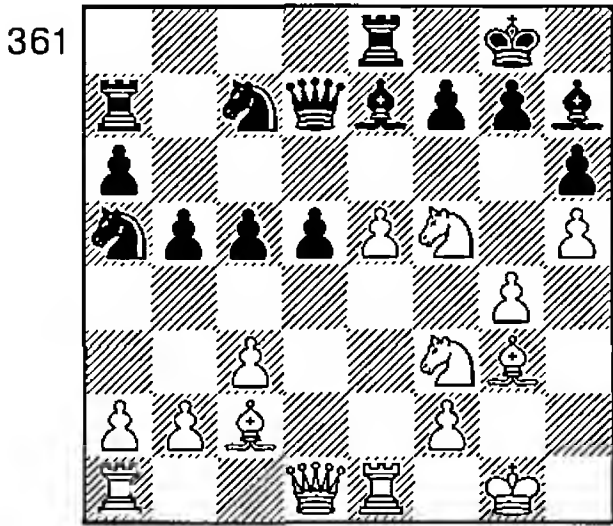
20. h5 ♖h7

21. ♞f3 ...

Black has a difficult position. If he tries to bring the knight into the game by 21... ♞c6, White can react with 22. ♙b1, when 22... ♙f8 doesn't work because of 23. ♞xe7 ♖xc2 24. ♞xc6.

21... ♙d7

Black is prepared to move the knight to the blockading square e6. This would have been bad one move earlier because of 20... ♞e6 21. ♞xe7+! ♙xe7 (21... ♖xe7 22. ♖h4) 22. ♖xh7+ ♙xh7 23. ♙xd5.

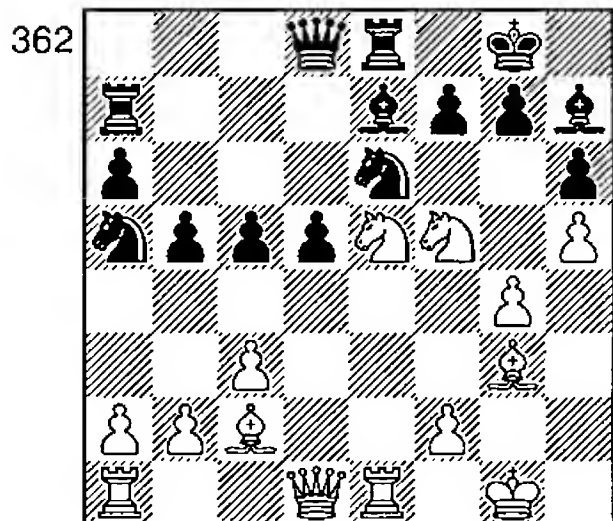


22. e6! ...

An effective blow and the right strategic decision: the pawn sacrifice allows the white knight to join the attack with tempo. There is no saving Black.

22... ♞xe6

23. ♞e5 ♚d8



24. ♞xh6+! ♙gxh6

25. ♚xh7+ ♚g7

Capturing the bishop leads to checkmate after 25... ♚xh7 26. ♞xf7 ♚d7 27. ♚d3.

26. ♞xf7 ♚b6

27. ♚xd5 ♙f8

28. ♙e5 ...

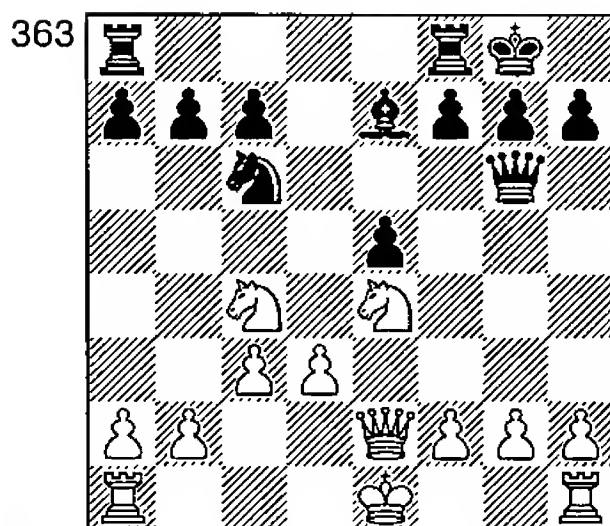
A quicker win is achieved by 28. ♚f5, but the game move is also good enough. After a series of checks, the black king will be caught in a mating net.

28... ♚xh7 29. ♚e4+ ♚g8 30. ♚g6+ ♙g7 31. ♞xh6+ ♙f8 32. ♙xg7+ ♚xg7 33. ♚f6+ 1-0

No. 115: Should I Castle – or Attack?

(See Diagram 363)

Q. In the diagram position, should White continue with 15. 0-0, 15. 0-0-0, or refrain from castling altogether?



15. g4! ...

This strong positional move clarifies the situation immediately. In the game **Chigorin–Charousek** (Nuremberg 1896), White refrains from castling to secure the knight's position on e4 by preventing ...f7-f5. At the same time, White prepares to occupy the f5 square himself. Chigorin used a similar method for strengthening the position of a minor piece in his game with Harry Nelson Pillsbury (St. Petersburg Match-Tournament 1895). Black should pay attention to f4 and play 15...f6 16. ♞e3 ♚f7 17. ♞f5 ♞d8 18. h4 ♞e6.

15... ♞fd8

16. ♞e3! ♙b5?!

Chess is a complicated game and errors are commonplace. As Savielly Tartakover once said, "Chess is a fairy tale of blunders."

Black should focus on the d3-pawn, beginning with 16... ♞d7.

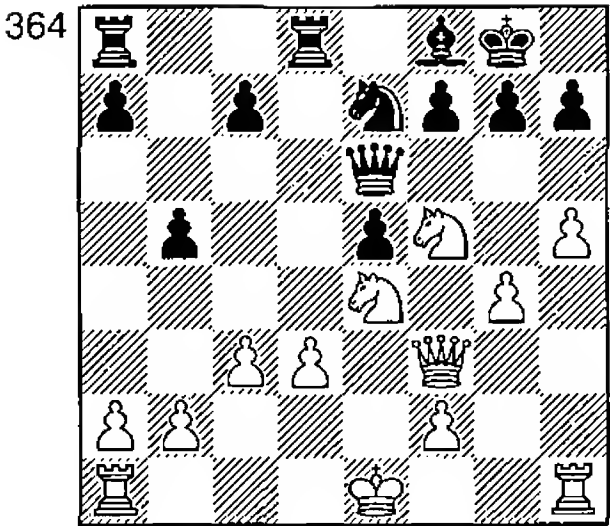
17. ♞f5 ♙f8

18. h4 ♚e6

19. ♚f3 ♞e7

20. h5 ...

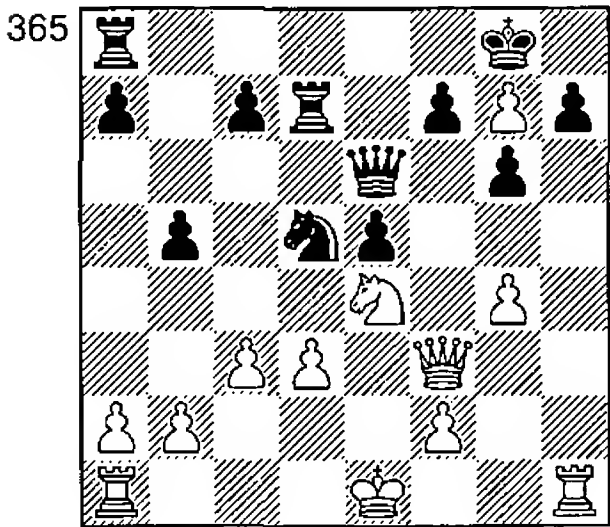
Chigorin plans to undermine the enemy castle. White's advantage is undeniable.



20... ♖d7
21. h6 g6
22. ♗g7! ...

This is even stronger than 22. ♗xe7+ ♕xe7 23. ♗f6+ ♖xf6 24. ♖xa8+, etc. Chigorin conducts the attack energetically.

22... ♕xg7
23. hxg7 ♖d5

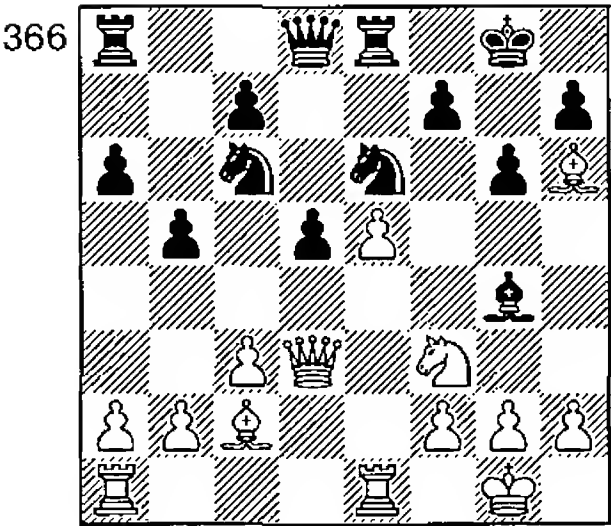


24. ♖xh7! ♖xh7
25. ♗g5+ ♖xg7
26. ♗xe6+ ...

The rest of the game requires no explanation.

26...fxe6 27. 0-0-0 ♗b6 28. g5 ♖f8 29. ♖h3 ♖xf2 30. ♖h6+ ♖f7 31. ♖h7+ ♖e8 32. ♖xg6+ ♖d8 33. ♖g8+ ♖e7 34. g6 ♖g2 35. ♖f1 1-0

No. 116:
To Trade, or Not to Trade?



Q. In the diagram position, evaluate the benefits for Black of trading off the light-squared bishop.

17... ♗f5

In the game **Balashov—Karasev** (USSR Championship 1971), exchanging the black bishop helped White. Bent Larsen played more precisely against Bobby Fischer at Santa Monica 1966: 17... ♗e7 18. ♗d4 ♗f5 19. ♗xf5 ♗xf5 20. ♗d2 ♖h4. The black cavalry showed its strength in this game, while the white bishops remained dormant. As the game is short and instructive, we give it in its entirety: 21. ♖f1 ♗c5 22. g3 ♖c4 23. ♖g2 ♗d3 24. ♗xd3 ♖xd3 25. ♗g5 c6 26. g4 ♗g7 27. ♖e3 ♖d2 28. b3 b4 29. ♖h3 bxc3 30. ♖h6 ♗e6 and White resigned.

18. ♖e2 ♗xc2
19. ♖xc2 ♖d7

19... ♖e7 was called for, as it would then be possible to cover the dark squares that were weakened by the move ...g7-g6 and the absence of the dark-squared bishop. Furthermore, Black would have the possibility of a counterattack in the

center against White's advanced e5-pawn.

20. ♖ad1 ♖ad8
21. ♕c1 ♜e7
22. ♗g5! ...

This strong move highlights the poor placement of the black pieces.

22... ♜xg5

Otherwise the bishop would go to f6.

23. ♜xg5 ...

White threatens 24. ♜e4.

23... ♜c6

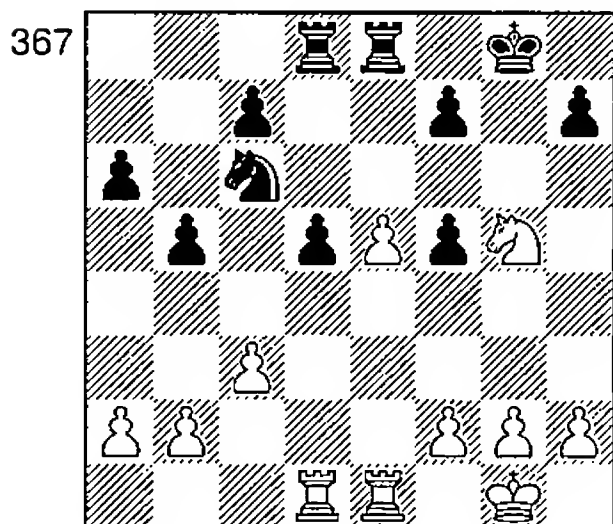
Black offers to sacrifice the queen:

24. ♜e4 dxe4 25. ♖xd7 ♖xd7, hoping to complicate the game. But Balashov prefers to transition into a favorable ending.

24. ♕f4 ♕f5

Black is compelled to trade queens. After 24...♕e7, there follows 25. e6!. However, Black can't prevent a break in the center.

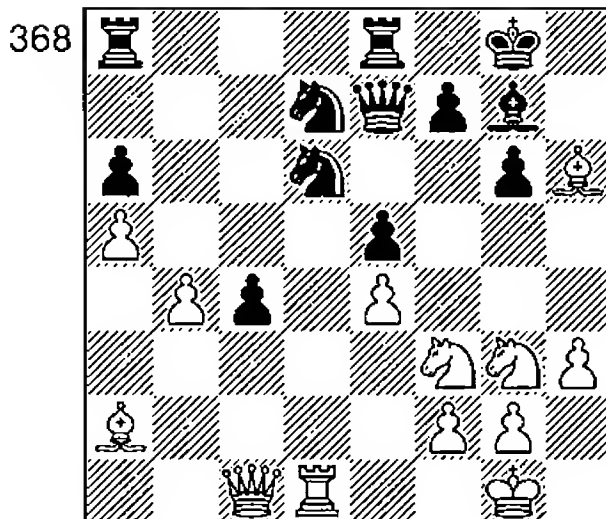
25. ♕xf5 gxf5



26. e6! fxe6 27. ♜xe6 ♖d7 28. ♜c5 ♖de7 29. ♖xe7 ♖xe7 30. ♜xa6 ♖e2 31. ♜xc7 ♖xb2 32. g3 f4 33. gxf4 ♖xa2 34. ♖xd5 b4 35. cxb4 ♜xb4 36. ♖d7 ♖a7 37. ♜g2 ♜c6 1-0

Black exceeded the time control, but his position was hopeless anyway.

No. 117: Natural, but Wrong



Q. In the diagram position, was the move 30...♜c8-d6 a) correct and in the spirit of the position; or b) erroneous and leading to defeat?

31. ♗xg7 ♕xg7

32. ♕g5!! ...

The natural move 30...♜d6, defending the c4-pawn, provoked a crisis in the game **Karpov–Spassky** (Moscow 1973). Black had set the trap 32. ♕d2? ♖ad8 33. ♕xd6? ♜f8. But please recall our earlier discussion of this tactical method. Black should have played 30...♖a7 when, after 31. ♗xg7 ♕xg7 32. ♕xc4, he has a strong attack and the possibility of playing on either flank with material equality.

Now White strikes the decisive blow. The value of this move is that it aims at the Achilles' heel of Black's position – the hanging knights.

32... f6

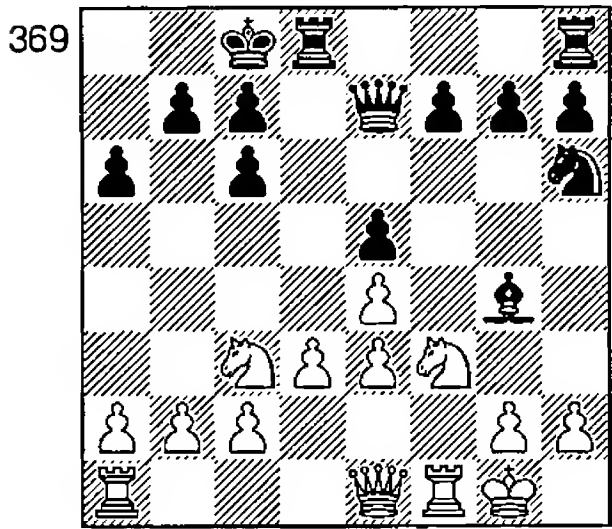
Tougher resistance was offered by 32...♖ac8, though after 33. ♖xd6, White's material advantage should be decisive.

33. ♕g4 ♕h7

34. ♜h4 ...

There is no defense. The seventh rank and the black king's pawn cover are badly weakened. Both 34...♖g8 35. ♕xc4 ♜g7 36. ♜xd6 ♜xd6 37. ♘hf5 and 34...♘f8 35. ♘xg6 ♘xg6 36. ♜h5+ are joyless. So Black resigned. 1-0

No. 118: Which Side to Play On?



Q. In the diagram position, on which flank should White play?

11. ♖b1! ...

On the queenside, of course! When Black castled long, in the game **Capablanca—Janowski** (St. Petersburg 1914), he did not realize that his opponent could organize a pawn storm of the king's residence. As soon as the b-pawn reaches b5, a break becomes inevitable.

The doubled pawns on the e-file make it difficult for White to play in the center, and the misconceived move 11. h3? would have led to a position (after 11... ♕d7 12. ♖b1 g5!) in which Black could obtain active counterplay by targeting the h3-pawn with the threat of ...g5-g4.

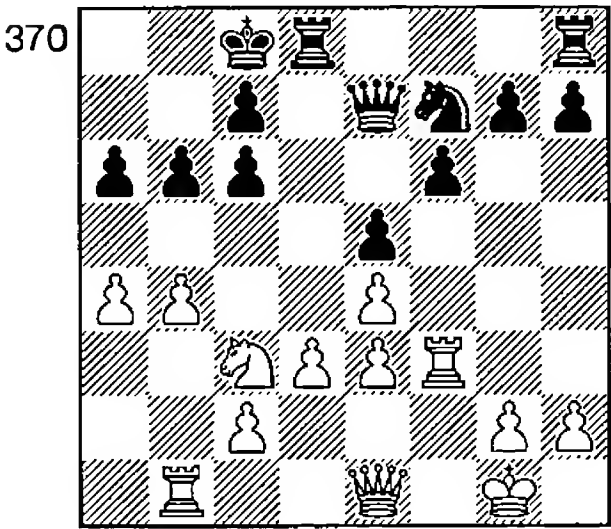
11... f6

Black must bring the knight into the game.

12. b4 ...

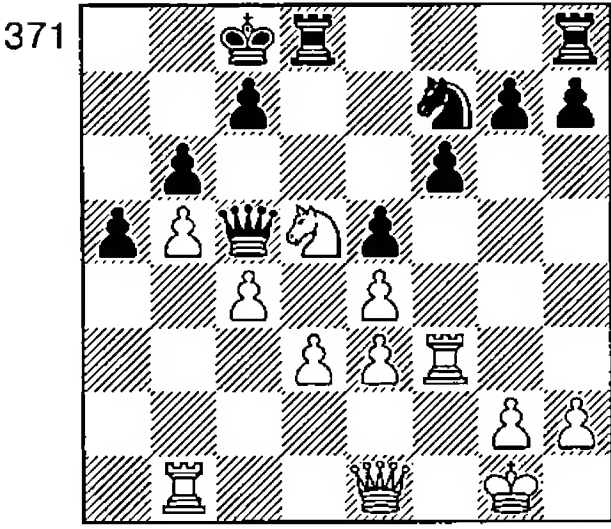
White has to start with the b-pawn. 12. a4 is answered by 12...c5. Incidentally, with the white pawn on a2, the move ...c6-c5 is harmless. Then White can play a2-a3 followed by b2-b4.

12... ♘f7
13. a4 ♕xf3
14. ♖xf3 b6?



Black will pay a high price for his blockade — White gains a foothold on the strategically important point d5. It was better to try 14...b5.

15. b5 cxb5
16. axb5 a5
17. ♘d5 ♜c5
18. c4! ...



Black has managed so far to prevent the opening of files on the queenside, but now

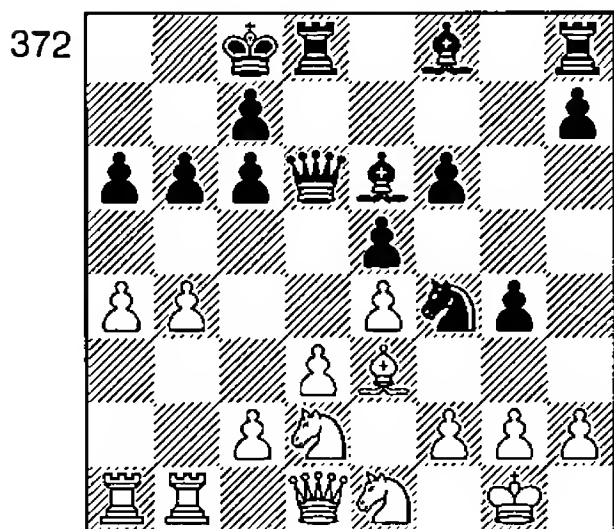
White only has to organize the advances d3-d4 and c4-c5. Black is defenseless.

18... ♖g5
19. ♖f2 ♗e6
20. ♕c3 ♖d7
21. ♖d1! ...

Accuracy is necessary even in the simplest of positions. After 21. ♖d2? Black has the effective sacrifice 21... ♖xd5 22. exd5 ♕xe3+ followed by 23... ♗c5 with a reliable blockade.

21... ♗b7 22. d4 ♕d6 23. ♖c2 exd4 24. exd4 ♗f4 25. c5 ♗xd5 26. exd5 ♕xd5 27. c6+ ♗b8 28. cxd7 ♕xd7 29. d5 ♖e8 30. d6 cxd6 31. ♕c6 1-0

No. 119: Feeling Discouraged in Attack and Defense



Q. How should White continue the attack on the queenside?

Hopefully, the reader will have noticed the similarity of this position to the one from Capablanca–Janowski. Here, in the game **Gaprindashvili–Verőci** (Belgrade 1974), Black has launched an attack on the kingside, but she cannot open files there yet, because White has not created any pawn weaknesses on

that flank. On the other hand, White's queenside offensive is more imminent because of the threat of b4-b5. Black's last move, 14...b6, was played to defend against this threat.

15. c4! ...

White's idea is to open files on the queenside at all costs. Here the cost is two pawns.

15... ♗xd3

Black has no choice. In case of 15... ♕d7, White will play 16. b5 and c4-c5.

16. c5! bxc5
17. bxc5 ♗xc5
18. ♕c2 ...

White achieves her objective of opening the b-file. Now she needs to exchange the opponent's strong light-squared bishop and bring her knight into the game.

18... ♗e7

On 18... ♕d7 White intended 19. ♖d1.

19. ♗c4 ♗xc4
20. ♕xc4 ♕e6
21. ♕c2 ...

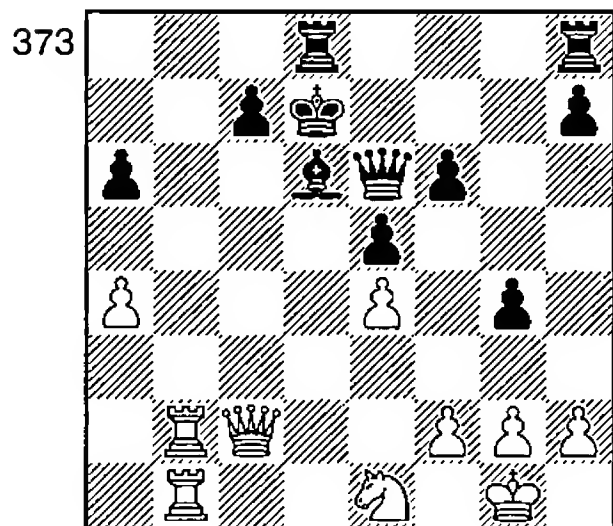
In case of 21. ♕b4, Black can reply 21... a5, and if 22. ♕xa5, then 22... ♗xe4.

21... ♗b7
22. ♖b2 c5

It is difficult to defend a bad position, which is why it is practically impossible to avoid mistakes. Black gives up the c-pawn in vain. Instead, she should try to relocate the knight to c4 by 22... ♗a5 23. ♖ab1 ♗c4 (but not 23... ♕c4 24. ♖b8+ ♗d7 25. ♕d2+), when it was possible to seal the point d6, for example 24. ♕b3 ♖d6 25. ♕b8+ ♗d7 26. ♕xh8 ♗xb2 27. ♖xb2 ♖d1 28. ♗f1 ♕c4+ 29. ♖e2 ♗b4. This variation is

certainly not forced, but it shows that Black's position is strong enough. However, White can answer 22...♗a5 by 23. ♖a7 when after 23...♗c4 24. ♖b3, she retains many threats.

23. ♖b1 ♗d6
24. ♖xc5 ♔d7
25. ♖xd6 ♖xd6



26. ♗d3 ...

White chooses the sharpest plan. The other way to play was with 26. g3 and then move the knight via g2-e3 to d5 or f5 depending on the situation.

26... ♔e7
27. ♖b7 ♖d7

Another inaccuracy; the rook has nothing to do on this square. Instead 27...♖c8 was necessary.

28. ♖a7 ♗dd8
29. ♗c5 ♖xc5

Unfortunately for Black, this capture is forced; otherwise, the knight will penetrate to a6. Black's bishop may have been "bad," but it was doing a good job of holding Black's position together. Now Black collapses quickly. Sometimes bad bishops are useful too.

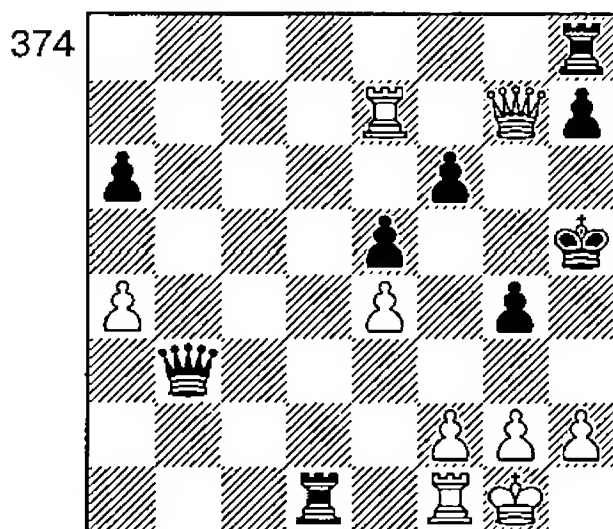
30. ♖xc5+ ...

30. ♖c7+ was also possible, but the game move is stronger.

30... ♔f7
31. ♖xc7+ ♔g6
32. ♖g7+ ...

It is not always possible to understand the sense of each move without knowing the situation on the clock. Time trouble has spoiled thousands of excellent games, including this one. The move 32. g3 with the threat of 33. ♖b6 would have led to a quick win. In that case, Black would not have had the maneuver ...♗e6-b3.

32... ♔h5
33. ♖e7 ♗b3
34. ♖f1 ♖d1



35. h3! ...

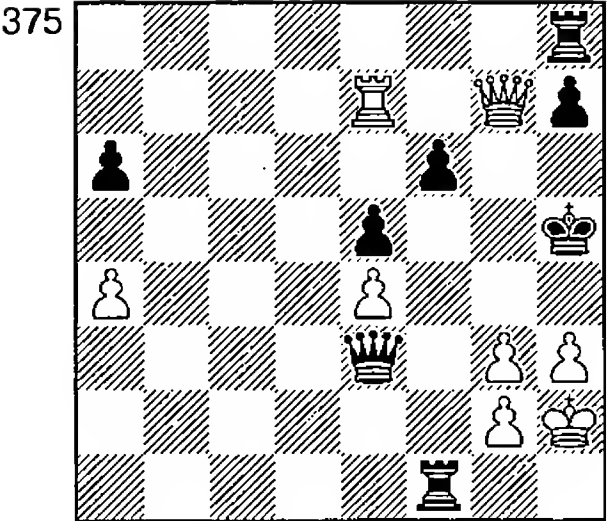
White understands the precarious position of Black's king, otherwise she would have entered the rook ending with an extra pawn by 35. ♖f7+.

35... ♖xf1+
36. ♔h2 ...

Of course White does not take the rook. But now she threatens 37. hxc4+, so Black defends the f6-pawn with tempo.

36... g3+
37. fxc3 ♖e3

Now Black threatens mate by 38... ♗g1.



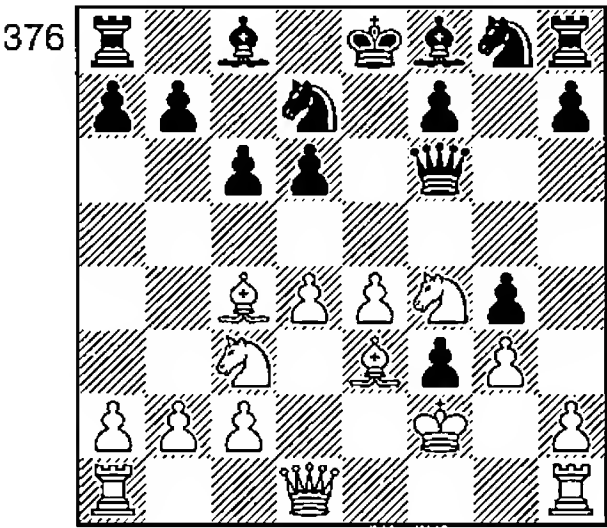
38. ♔g4+ ...

Here White was convinced that she had committed an error in her calculation. She was planning 38. g4+ ♔h4 39.g3# but missed the reply 39...♔xg3#. Her confidence thus shattered, she now opted for a draw by repetition. The point is that it was possible to carry out the nice combination 38. ♔xe5+! fxe5 39. g4+ ♔h4 40. ♔e7+ ♔g5 41. g3#.

- 38... ♔h6
- 39. ♔g7+ ♔h5
- 40. ♔g4+ ♔h6
- 41. ♔g7+ ½-½

Draw. What a shame!

No. 120: When the Time Is Ripe



Q. Suggest a continuation for White.

16. e5! ...

White's move in **Steinitz—Anderssen** (London [Match/2] 1886) is evocative of the spirit of Paul Morphy. White's advantage in development and in the center allows him to launch an attack.

16... ♔e7

On 16...dxe5 17. dxe5 ♔xe5, there follows 18. ♔d4.

17. e6! ...

White opens the e-file.

17... ♔f6

18. ♔xe6 ♔f6

19. ♔f4 ♔xe6

20. ♔xe6 ...

The threat of 21. ♔e1 compels the king to move.

20... ♔d8

21. ♔e1 ...

White has an edge in development, he possesses the e-file, his bishops occupy powerful positions, and Black's king is stranded in the center: these factors define White's decisive positional advantage. Despite determined resistance, Black cannot break loose.

21... ♔g7

22. d5 c5

23. ♔b5 ♔e8

24. ♔d2 ♔gf6

25. ♔a5+ b6

26. ♔a4 ♔b7

Otherwise 27. ♔xd6+ ♔xd6 28. ♔c6 follows.

27. ♔g5 ♔e7

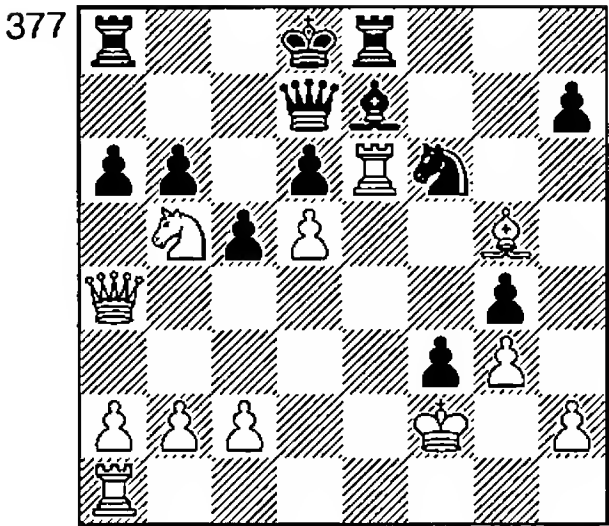
28. ♔f7 ...

White doesn't give Black a chance to breathe. The threat is 29. ♔xe8 ♔xe8 30. ♔xd6.

28... ♔d7

29. ♔xe8 ♔xe8

30. ♔e6 a6

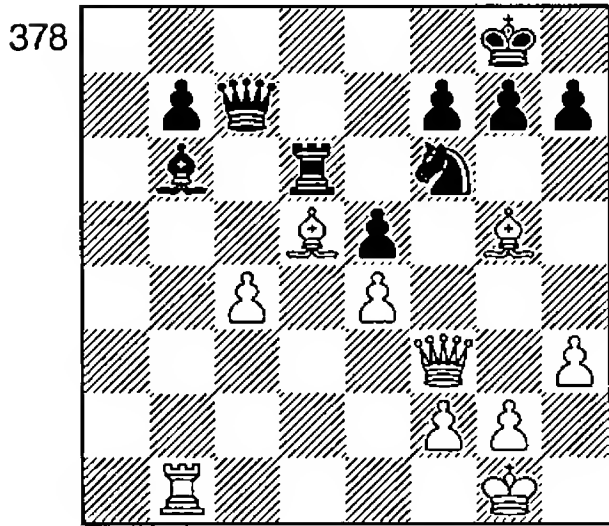


31. ♖ae1 ...

Black must trade queens, but then the pin on the e7-bishop leads to material disaster.

31... ♙xb5 32. ♙xb5 axb5 33. ♗xf6 ♖a7 34. ♖xd6 ♖d7 35. ♖de6 ♗xf6 36. ♗xe8+ ♔c7 37. ♖8e6 ♗xb2 38. ♖e7 ♗d4+ 39. ♙f1 ♖xe7 40. ♖xe7+ ♔d6 41. ♖xb7 ♙xd5 42. ♖h4 ♙c4 43. ♖xg4 ♙c3 44. h4 ♙xc2 45. h5 ♗e3 46. ♖f4 c4 47. h6 ♗xf4 48. gxf4 c3 49. h7 ♙b1 50. h8 ♙ c2 51. ♙h7 ♙b2 52. ♙g7+ ♙xa2 53. ♙c3 1-0

No. 121:
Finding an Invasion Route



Q. How can White break through on the queenside?

The magnificence of White's light-squared bishop is evident. From the center it surveys both flanks and, together with the rook, which "x-rays" the b7-pawn, it allows us to find the first move easily.

25. c5! ...

In **Lilienthal–Aronin** (USSR Championship 1948), Black's answer is practically forced, as the situation after 25... ♗xc5 26. ♖xb7 is unacceptable. This game is an excellent example of the power of a centralized piece that can operate on two flanks.

25... ♙xc5

26. ♖c1 ...

Since White couldn't break through on the b-file, he switches to the c-file.

26... ♙a5

27. ♗xf6! ...

White has no regrets about parting with the dark-squared bishop. His aim is to deflect the rook in order to invade on the eighth rank. When planning strategic operations, it is extremely important to take into account the tactical features of the position. Let's not forget that chess is ninety percent tactics!

27... ♖xf6

Creating an escape square for the king and spoiling the pawn structure by 27... gxf6 28. ♖c8+ ♖d8 29. ♙h5 brings Black no relief. Nor is White's attack tamped down by the sacrifice 29... ♖xd5. And 29... ♖d7 fails to 30. ♙g4+. Thus, f7 will inevitably fall.

28. ♖c8+ ♗d8

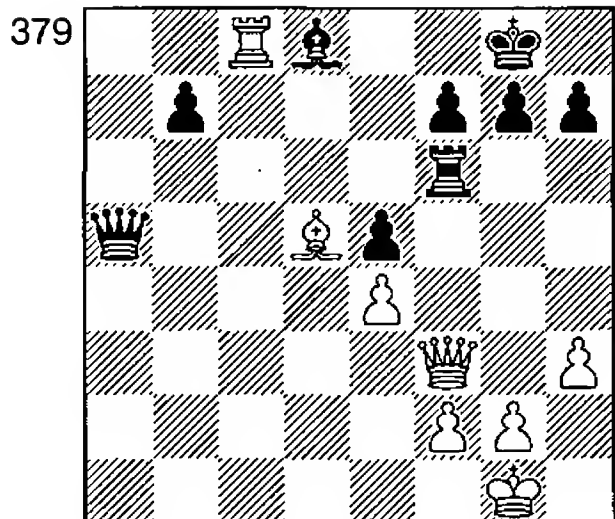
(See Diagram 379)

29. ♙c3! ♙b6

30. ♙b2! ...

An amazing combination! It's surprising that this example is absent from many tactics collections.

30... ♙d6



31. f4! ...

White could have captured the e-pawn, but he proceeds resolutely.

31... exf4

31... Rxf4 is met by 32. Wxe5.

32. e5 Wd7

33. Wxb7 We8

34. Wb8 ...

One must be careful even in the most favorable positions. After 34. exf6?, the game would end with perpetual check: 24... We1+ 35. Wh2 Wg3+.

34... Rd6

35. Wxd6 Bb6+

36. Wxb6 Wxc8

37. e6 g5

38. e7 Kg7

39. Bc6 1-0

A. Is White's attack on the kingside dangerous?

B. Back up your conclusion with analysis.

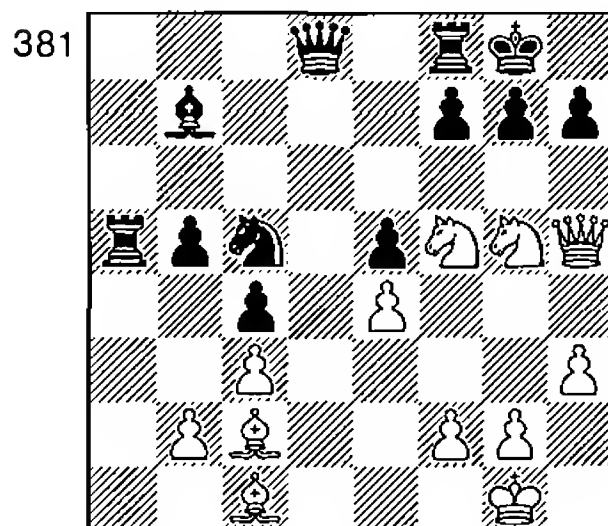
As a rule, an open file is usually utilized to infiltrate into the opponent's camp. In **Cherepkov—Budarin** (Alma-Ata 1963), White used the a-file for other purposes.

22. Rxa5! Ra5

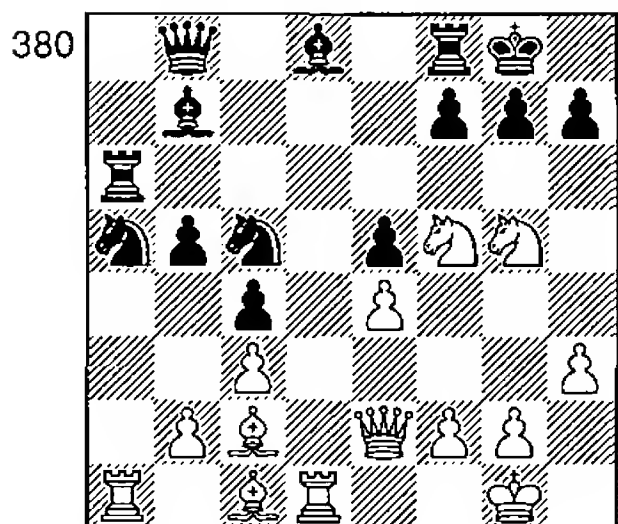
It is easy to verify that the line 22... Bxa5 23. Wh5 h6 24. Be7+ Kh8 25. Bxf7+ Kh7 26. Bxe5 gives White an irresistible attack on the kingside. But the game continuation allows a second sacrifice.

23. Rxd8! Wxd8

24. Wh5 ...



No. 122: Deflection Sacrifice



24... Wxg5

Absolutely hopeless is 24...h6 25. Bxh6+ gxh6 26. Wxh6 Wxg5 27. Wxg5+ Kh7 28. Wf5+ Kh8 29. Bh6.

25. Bxg5 Be6

26. Kh2 Ra2

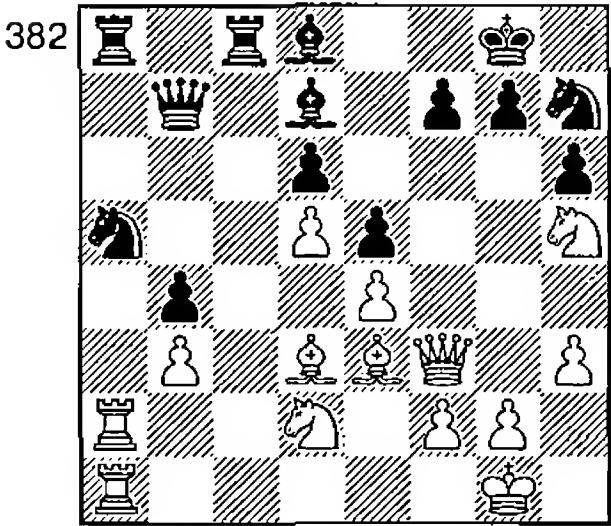
27. Be7 Rfa8

28. Bd6 g6

29. Wf3 1-0

In this game Cherepkov gave an excellent illustration of the tactical exploitation of open files.

No. 123: More Deflection

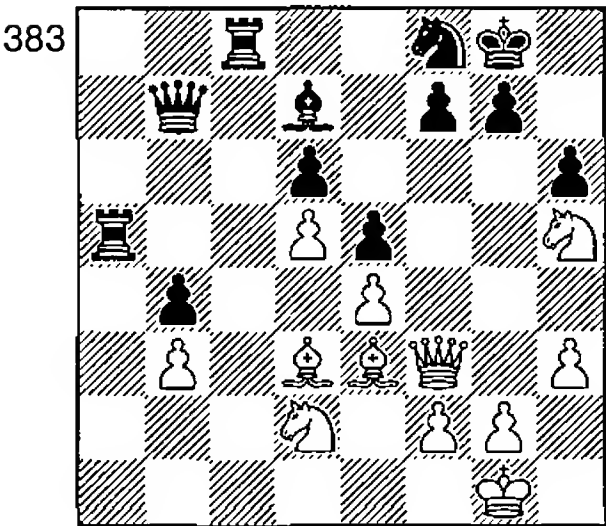


Q. Is 27...♘f8 a) good, strengthening the king's defenses; or b) weak, allowing White to create additional threats to the black king?

27... ♘f8?

In the game **Spassky–Arutunov** (Command Tournament, Moscow 1965), Black managed to neutralize White's threats on the queenside. However, now the black pieces cannot shift over to the kingside in time. Spassky skillfully uses a combination to exploit f6 and h6.

28. ♖xa5! ♙xa5
29. ♖xa5 ♖xa5



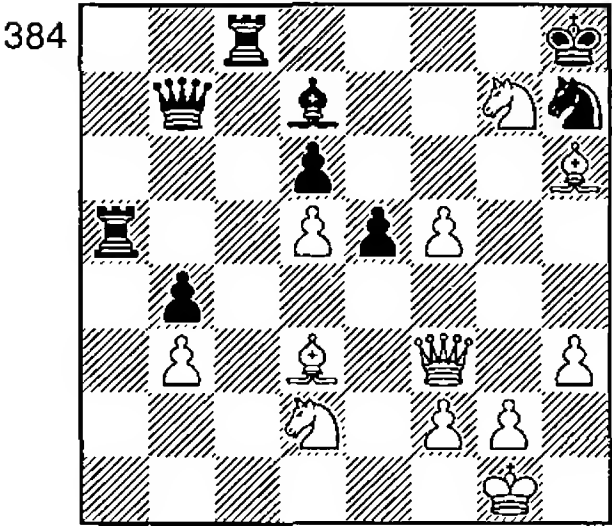
Black's control of f6 has been weakened as much as possible. Now Spassky

destroys the pawn cover around the king with a bishop sacrifice.

30. ♗xh6! ♘h7

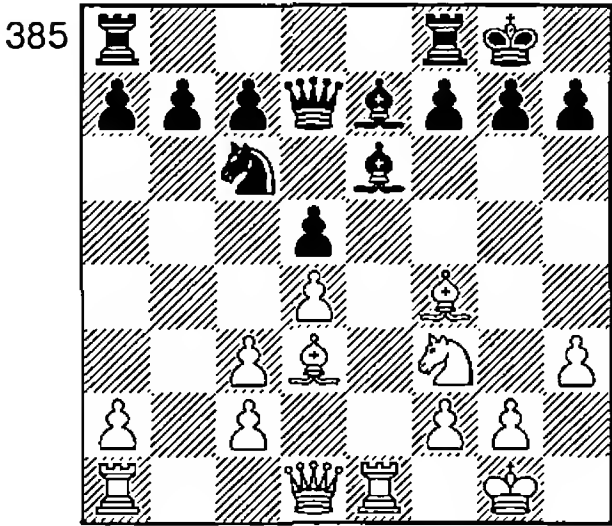
Unfortunately, capturing the bishop is met by 31. ♔f6 with the unstoppable ♗g7# to follow.

31. ♗xg7 f5
32. exf5 ♙h8



33. ♘h5 ♖g8
34. f6 1-0

No. 124:
All Is Not Quiet on the Front



Q. Is 12...♖fe8: a) a good move that fits the position; or b) a mistake that worsens Black's position?

12... ♖fe8

This natural move is an inaccuracy. In **Aronin–Zelnin** (USSR 1959), the opposition of the rooks on the e-file allows White to strike a decisive blow. The position may look quiet, but looks are deceiving. For example, if Black tries 12...h6 to stop the white knight from reaching g5, then 13. ♖d2 follows, when it will be difficult to beat back the threat of a sacrifice on h6. Instead of the game move, 12...♙f6 was more appropriate.

13. ♖b1 ♙ab8

In case of 13...b6, the attack 14. ♙b5 would be annoying.

14. ♖e3! ...

The open e-file can play an important role and White aspires to take it. In addition, the rook is ready to roll to g3 to assist in a direct attack on the black king's position.

14... ♙f6

Black had to risk playing 14...h6, as it would not have been easy to sacrifice there and White would no longer have attacking possibilities on g5. White could choose between 15. ♘e5 and 15. ♘h2 followed by ♗d1-h5.

15. ♘g5 ♙xg5

16. ♙xg5 ...

Now White has two strong bishops and attacking prospects on the kingside.

16... ♘e7

The purpose of 13. ♖b1 now becomes clear. The point is that the useful maneuver ...♙e6-f5 is impossible because of the capture on e8 with the subsequent loss of the b7-pawn.

17. ♗h5 ♘g6

18. ♖be1 b6

After this move, the outcome of the game is clear. A long struggle would

have ensued after the correct 18... ♘f8.

19. f4 ...

White threatens to win a piece by 20. f5. The same answer would follow on 19...h6 or 19...f6.

19... f5

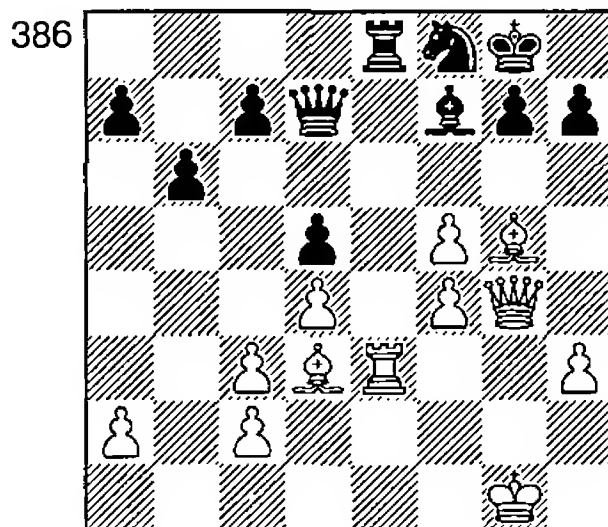
19...♖ec8 would have been answered by 20. g4.

20. g4 ♘f8

21. gxf5 ♙f7

22. ♗g4 ♖xe3

23. ♖xe3 ♖e8



24. ♖g3 ...

Now g7 comes under blistering attack; as a result, Black parts with a second pawn and the game is decided.

24... ♗c6

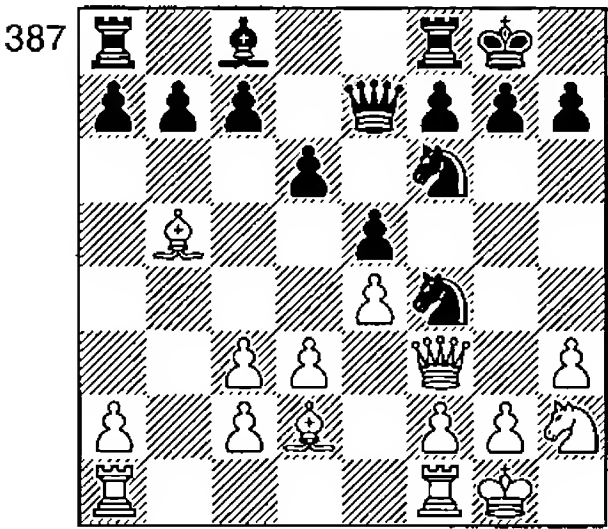
25. ♙h4 ♗h6

26. f6 ♙g6

Or 26...g6 27. ♙g5 ♗h5 28. ♗xh5 gxf5 29. ♙h6+ ♗h8 30. ♖g7.

27. ♙g5 ♗h5 28. ♗xh5 ♙xh5 29. fxf6 ♘e6 30. ♙h6 c5 31. f5 c4 32. ♙f1 ♘d8 33. ♙g2 ♙f7 34. ♖f2 ♘c6 35. ♙e3 ♖xe3 36. ♗xe3 b5 37. a3 a5 38. h4 b4 39. cxb5 axb4 40. axb4 ♘xb4 41. c3 ♘c6 42. ♖f4 1-0

No. 125:
The Same-Side Pawn Storm



Q. On which side should Black play?

One of the laws of chess strategy is that the player with the advantage is obligated to attack. However, this does not have to be done with just the pieces; the pawns can be used as a battering ram to drive off the opponent's forces and open lines for the long-range pieces. Conducting such an attack when castled on the same side is tricky because one's own king's position is weakened as the pawns advance. Thus, the success of the infantry offensive depends in many respects on the situation in the center.

If the center is closed, a wing attack usually develops in a straightforward fashion and, as a rule, the king is quite safe behind the attacking pawns. To organize counterplay, the defender should try to open the center or prepare a break on the other flank to open files for the rooks. In closed positions the pawns should be used to pry open lines for the pieces to gain entry to the enemy camp.

In open positions, generally a pawn storm is possible only as an exception. However, there are many examples in

modern-day practice where a pawn storm is conducted in open positions. Still, it is necessary to follow the rule: if a pawn storm on the kingside is planned, one must take measures against a counterattack in the center.

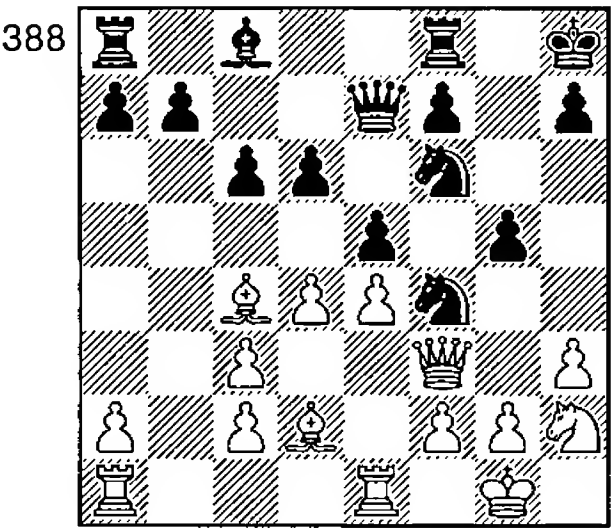
Let's see how things developed in the game **Lipnitsky–Poliak** (Kiev 1948).

12... g5!

Black decides that his strong position in the center allows him to begin a pawn storm on the kingside, where he has greater forces and a well-placed knight on f4 close to the enemy king.

We must pay special attention to White's pawn structure. Note that White has created an escape square for his king at a time when the position did not demand it. As a result, the kingside has been weakened and is a target for Black's attack. Moving the pawns in front of the castled position should be postponed for as long as possible, and it should be done only at the appropriate moment (and never before then).

13. ♖f1 c6
14. ♕c4 ♖h8
15. d4 ...



White attacks the center, but he doesn't get enough counterplay because

his pieces lack coordination. In contrast, Black's well-arrayed forces can be relied on to attack successfully.

15... ♖g8

16. ♕f1 g4

The pawn breaches the defenses and, as always happens in such cases, the pawn storm is followed by a piece attack — here, along the soon-to-be-opened g-file.

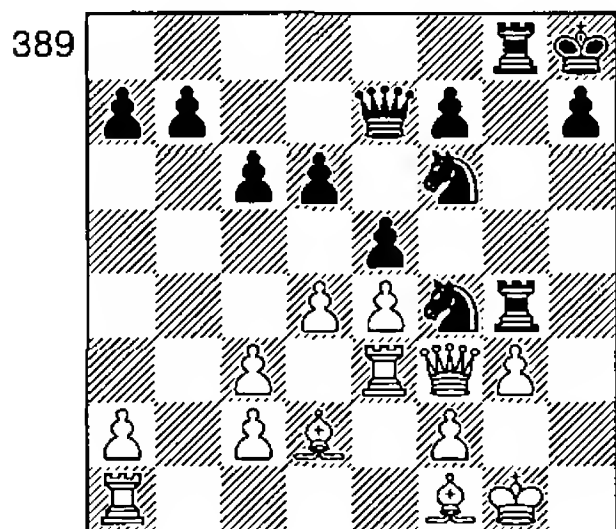
17. hxg4 ♙xg4

18. ♘xg4 ♜xg4

19. g3 ♜ag8

20. ♜e3 ...

White manages to repel the first wave of the assault. However, Black isn't done yet.



20... ♜4g6!

Now that the opponent has strengthened g3, Black switches the focal point of the offensive to the new weakness at f2.

21. dxe5 dxe5

22. c4 ♙g4

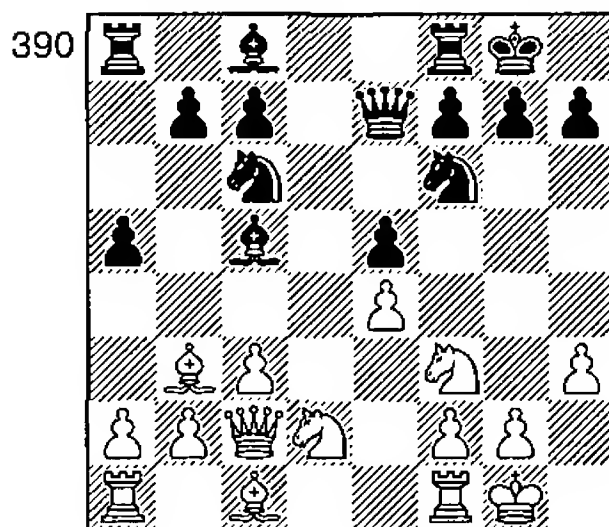
23. ♜b3 ♜f6

White can no longer withstand the pressure from Black's pieces. It is easy to see how Black wins if White refuses to accept the knight sacrifice. One way is 24. ♖d1 ♙xf2 25. ♙xf2 ♙d3+ 26.

♙g2 ♜f2+ 27. ♙h1 ♜xf1+ 28. ♖xf1 ♜xg3.

24. gxf4 ♙e3+ 25. ♖g3 exf4 26. ♖xg8+ ♙xg8 27. fxe3 ♜g6+ 28. ♙f2 ♙h4+ and Black wins.

No. 126: Nothing Ventured, Nothing Gained



Q. Can Black take advantage of White's weakened kingside?

11 ... ♘h5!

In **Psakhis–Chekhov** (USSR Championship 1980), it is at least possible to try. The knight is aiming for f4, when White can't expel it with g2-g3 because the h-pawn, which has already moved, would be left unsupported.

12. ♘c4 ♖f6

13. ♙h2 ♘f4!

14. ♙e3? ...

Instead 14. ♙g1 was necessary, when it is unclear how Black should continue. Now there follows an effective combination.

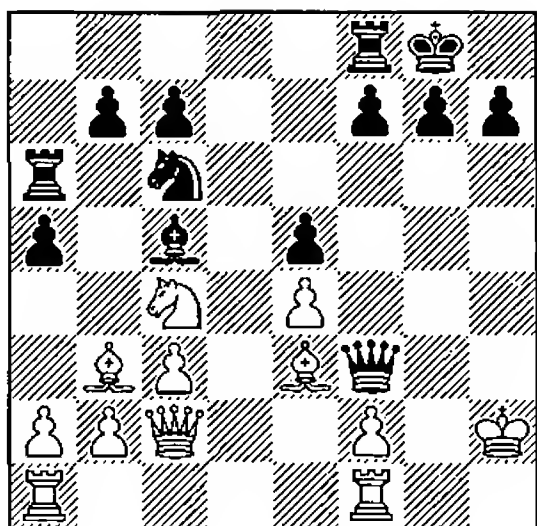
14... ♙xg2!

15. ♙xg2 ♙xh3+!

16. ♙xh3 ♖xf3+

17. ♙h2 ♜a6

391

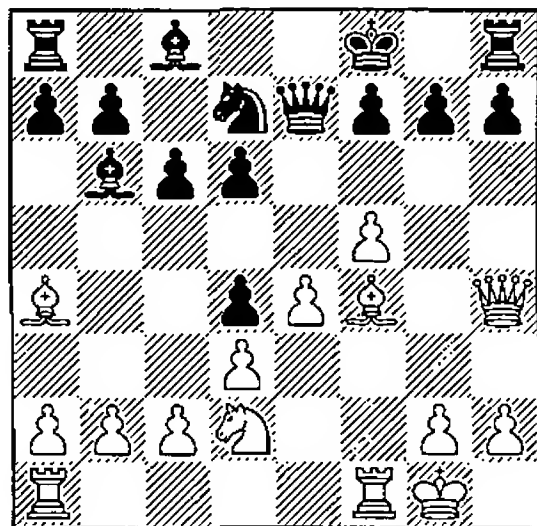


The assiduous student should take note of this maneuver, which brings a new piece to the attack. Black threatens 18...♘d4 19. cxd4 ♖h5+ and 20...♗g6, against which there is no adequate defense.

18. ♖d1 ♖xe4 19. ♗g1 ♖h4+ 20. ♖g2 ♘d4 21. cxd4 exd4 22. ♗g5 ♖xg5+ 23. ♖f1 ♖f5 24. ♗c2 ♖h3+ 25. ♗g2 ♗f6 26. ♖d3 ♗f3 27. ♖xh7+ ♖xh7 28. ♗xh7+ ♖xh7 29. ♗e1 0-1

No. 127: Keep 'em on Their Toes

392



Q. Find the best move for White.

In Boleslavsky–Tolush (Parnu 1947), White's pieces are poised to attack the enemy king. To this end it is necessary to

keep the king in its precarious state for as long as possible and to use all available means to prevent the enemy rooks from connecting. Thus, White should open as many lines as possible to increase his activity and keep Black on the defensive.

15. f6! ...

In this position, open files are more important than pawns.

15 ... ♖xf6

The best answer. Black would lose quickly after 15...gxf6 16. ♗h6+ ♖e8 17. ♗g7 or 15...♘xf6 16. ♗g5 ♗d8 17. e5 ♖xe5 (17...dxe5 18. ♗e4) 18. ♗ae1 ♖a5 19. ♗xf6 ♗xf6 20. ♗xf6 ♖xd2 21. ♗xd6.

16. ♖g3 ...

The tempting 16. ♗g5 ♖g6 17. ♗e7+ ♖g8 doesn't give a lasting advantage. For example, 18. ♗c4 (18. ♗b3 ♗e5 19. ♗f3 ♗e6 20. ♗xe5 dxe5 21. ♗f3 ♗xb3 22. axb3 (after 22. ♗g3 ♗xc2, Black has sufficient compensation for the queen) 22...h5 23. ♗g3 ♖e6 24. ♗f6 ♗h7 and Black defends) 18...♗c5 19. ♗xd6 ♗xa4 20. ♗xb6 ♖xd6 21. ♗xa8 f6 and it's not clear how the white knight can get out of the corner.

16 ... ♗e5

17. ♗b3 ♖e8

18. ♗xe5 ...

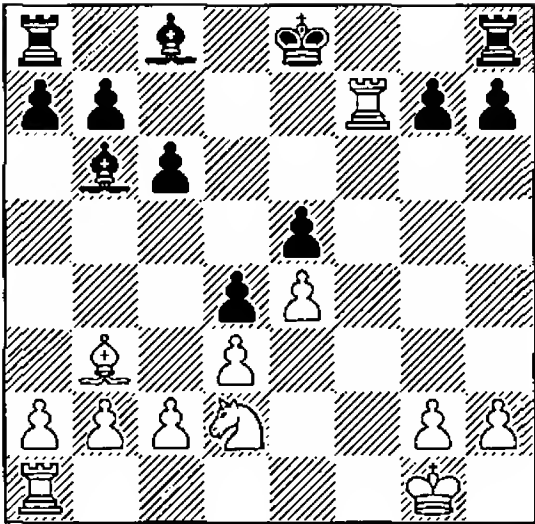
Even stronger was 18. ♗f3, when Black has nothing better than 18...♗xf3+ 19. ♗xf3, but White wins by 19...♖g6 20. ♗xd6 ♖xg3 21. ♗xf7+ ♖d8 22. ♗xg3.

18...♖xe5 19. ♖xe5 dxe5 20. ♗xf7:

(See Diagram 393)

It is always dangerous to have an enemy rook on your second rank. At the same time, all of Black's pieces are limited in scope and serve no active function. In view of the threat 21. ♗f3, Black

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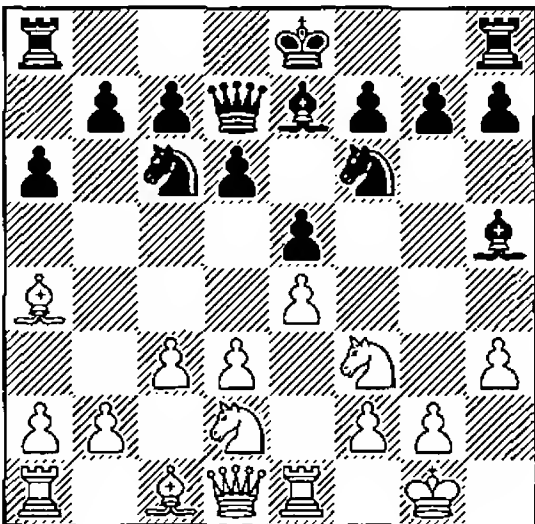


has to give up the g7-pawn, but it does not spare him from further losses.

20...♙d8 21. ♖xg7 ♗f6 22. ♖f7 ♙e7 23. ♖af1 a5 24. a4 b5 25. ♖g7 ♖b8 26. ♗f3 ♗f6 27. ♖f7 bxa4 28. ♖xf6 axb3 29. cxb3 ♖xb3 30. ♖xc6 ♙d7 31. ♖a6 ♙e7 32. ♗xe5 ♙e8 33. ♖xa5 ♖xb2 34. ♖a7+ ♙e6 35. ♗f3 ♖b4 36. ♗g5+ ♙d6 37. ♖f6+ ♙e5 38. ♖aa6 ♖b1+ 39. ♙f2 ♖b2+ 40. ♙g3 ♙c6 41. ♖axc6 1-0

No. 128: Weakening the Pawn Cover

394



Q. Suggest a plan for Black.

10 ... ♗g5!

In Kots–Spassky (USSR Championship 1961), Black has all the precon-

ditions for an attack. The white king's castle has been seriously weakened by the move h2-h3, and thanks to that the opponent has an opportunity to open a breach. The kingside pawn storm promises to be very dangerous because Black has not yet castled.

11. g4 ♗g6
12. ♗f1 h5!
13. ♗h2 ...

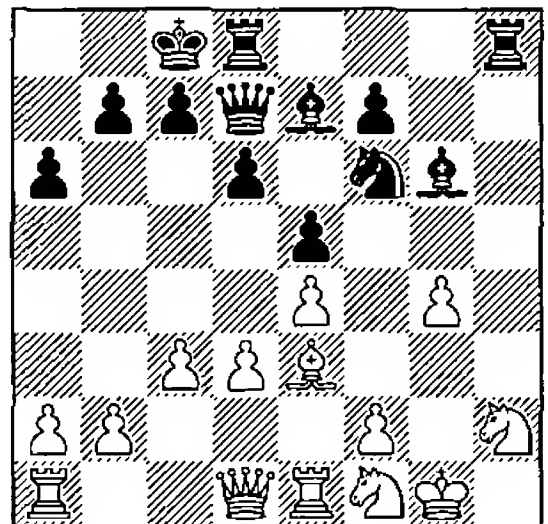
White aims to buttress the king's position. On 13. ♗xg5 or 13. ♙xg5, Black could play 13...hxg4 14. hxg4 ♗xg4 and open up the g- and h-files.

13... hxg4
14. hxg4 0-0-0
15. ♙xc6 ...

This move loses. It was still possible to try to obtain counterplay on the queenside by 15. c4.

15 ... ♙xc6
16. ♙xg5 ♙d7
17. ♙e3 ...

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17 ... ♗xg4!

This effective piece sacrifice prevents White from fortifying his position. As a rule, when attacking a castled position, one cannot do without a sacrifice.

18. ♙xg4 ...

If 18. ♘xg4, then 18... ♖h3 19. ♘h2 ♖dh8 with a strong attack.

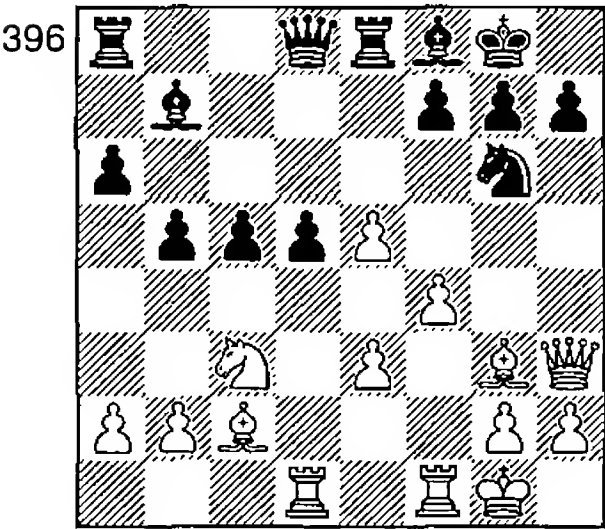
18 ... f5
19. exf5 ...

Even 19. ♖xg6 ♖g8 20. exf5 ♖xf5 wins for Black.

19 ... ♙xf5
20. ♖e2 ♖dg8+
21. ♘g3 ♙h4
22. ♖f3 ♙xd3
23. ♙d2 ♙xg3
24. ♖xd3 ♖h3

0-1

No. 129: Sacrifice for Activity



Q. Can White open files for his pieces?

From the very first moves of a game we aspire to maximize the activity of our pieces. However, it is inevitable that positions will arise in which our own pieces and pawns hinder their own potential activity. Thus, when conducting an attack it is often useful to open important lines by means of a sacrifice.

19. e6! ...

In the game **Schlechter–Janowski** (Ostend 1905), White wishes to open files on the kingside. However, the immediate 19. f5 would be met by the troublesome answer 19... ♗e5, when the position remains closed. Therefore, the preliminary move in the game is necessary.

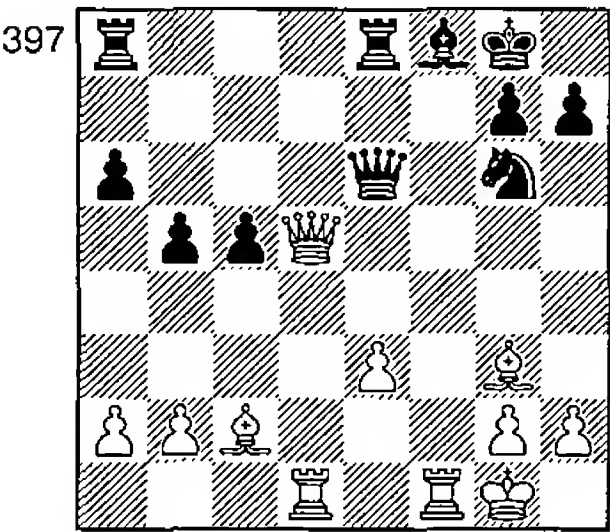
19... fxe6
20. f5! ...

Now it is impossible to prevent the opening of the f-file.

20... exf5
21. ♖xf5 ♖e7

The variation 21... ♖e7 22. ♙h4! does not favor Black.

22. ♘xd5 ♙xd5
23. ♖xd5+ ♖e6

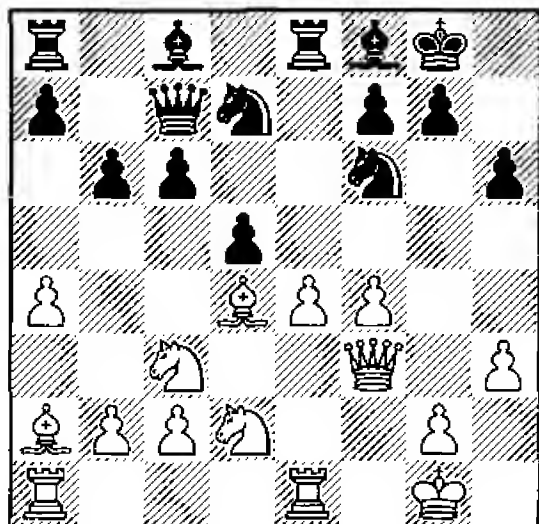


Black will now lose material, but he cannot hide the king in the corner by 23... ♖h8 24. ♙xg6 hxg6 25. ♖f3 ♖d8 26. ♙d6 because of the mate threats.

24. ♙e4! ♖ac8 25. ♖xe6+ ♖xe6 26. ♙d5 ♖ce8 27. ♙xe6+ ♖xe6 28. ♖d8 c4 29. ♙d6 ♖d6 30. ♖xf8+ ♘xf8 31. ♖xd6 ♘g6 32. ♖xa6 ♙e5 33. ♖b6 ♘d3 34. ♖xb5 1-0

No. 130: Don't Open Lines Against Yourself!

398



Q. Evaluate the move 15... dxe4.

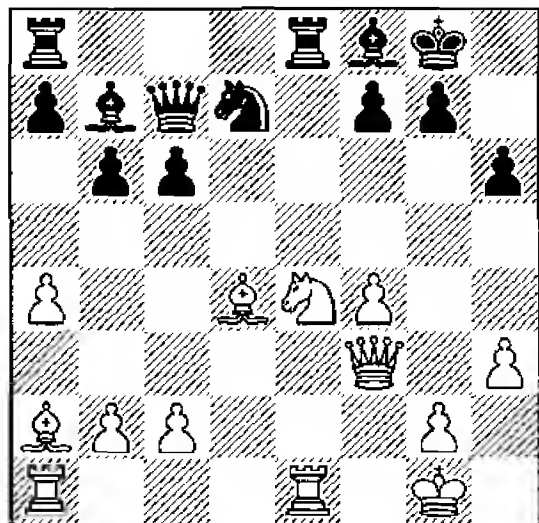
15 ... dxe4?

In the game **Panov–Mosionzhik** (Alma-Ata 1963), this was the decisive positional error. Opening the a2–g8 diagonal leads to immediate defeat. However, it is Black's previous play which got him into this situation that we should criticize. This game is an interesting example of direct attack against the king.

16. ♖dxe4 ♗xe4

17. ♗xe4 ♜b7

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18. ♕h5! ...

Played with the obvious threat of 19. ♕xf7+. On 18... ♖c5, there follows 19. ♖g5! hxg5 20. fxg5 with the irresistible

quiet move 21. g6. Black cannot play 18... ♕xf4 because of 19. g3 and the queen must leave the f-pawn and the king to their fate.

18... ♖e7

19. ♖g3! ...

Sadly, the beautiful variation 19. ♖g5 ♕xf4 20. ♖xe7 ♕xd4+ 21. ♖h1 ♖xe7 22. ♖xf7+ ♖h8 23. ♕g6 ♖f8! doesn't work.

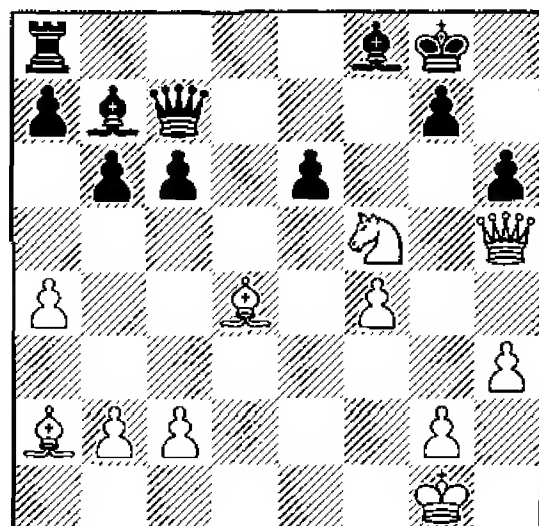
19... ♖xe1+

20. ♖xe1 ♖c5

21. ♖f5 ♖e6

22. ♖xe6 fxe6

400



Just as in the days of Chigorin, about whom Panov wrote so much, White now declared checkmate in three moves.

23. ♖xh6+ gxh6

24. ♖xe6+ ♖h7

25. ♕f5#

No. 131: Time Over Material

(See Diagram 401)

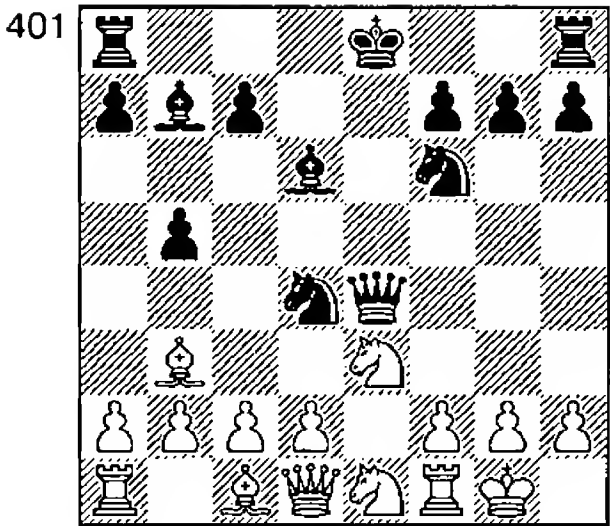
Q. Suggest a way for Black to attack.

12... ♕h4!

In the game **Belsitzmann–Rubinstein** (Poland 1917), Black begins a direct attack on the opposing king.

13. g3 ...

Black has skillfully caused White to make a hole in his own castle. 13. h3 was not



possible because of 13...h5 with the further introduction of the king's rook to the attack.

- 13... ♖h3
14. c3 h5!

Time is much more important than material here.

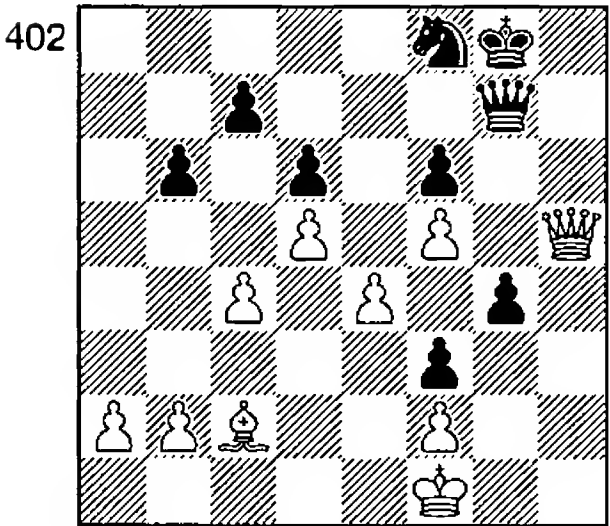
15. cxd4 h4!
16. ♖e2 ...

The defense by 16. f3 hxg3 17. ♖e2 could only delay the inevitable: 17... gxh2+ 18. ♖h1 ♗h5 19. ♗f5+ ♕f8.

- 16... ♖xh2+!
17. ♖xh2 hxg3+
18. ♖g1 ♖h1#

Rubinstein conducted the attack relentlessly. White's queenside never arose from its slumber.

No. 132: Activity over Material



Q. How can White activate his bishop?

44. e5!! ...

In the game Alekhine–H.Johner (Zürich 1934), White's bishop is hemmed in by its own pawns. Thus, Alekhine carries out this pawn break. Pawn breaks are often played as a sacrifice to open lines for other pieces, or to acquire strategically important squares, or (especially in an ending) to create a passed pawn.

- 44... dxe5

After 44...fxe5, there follows 45. f6 when the queen will be diverted from the defense of the g4-pawn. If 45...♖xf6, the fate of the f3-pawn is shown by 46. ♖xg4+ and 47. ♗e4.

45. d6! ...

With these pawn sacrifices, White aims to open the a2–g8 diagonal for the bishop. On 45...cxd6 there follows 46. c5! with the unstoppable threat of 47. ♗b3(+).

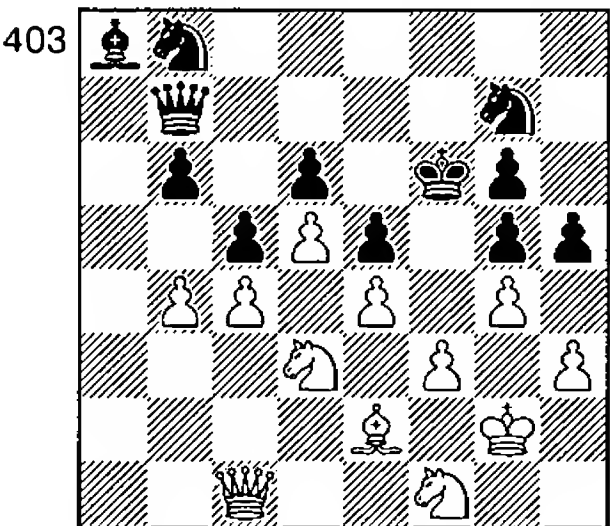
- 45... c5
46. ♗e4 ...

Despite his opponent's efforts, White achieves his objective.

- 46... ♖d7
47. ♖h6! ...

Black resigned as 47...♖f7 48. ♗d5+ ♖e8 49. ♖xf6, threatening ♗c6, is convincing enough.

No. 133: Undermining Operation



Q. How can White activate his pieces?

41. h4! ...

In the game **Landau–P.Schmidt** (Noordwijk 1938), Black's pieces are huddled on the queenside, far away from the king. This is a clear signal for White to play actively on the kingside, and this undermining serves that purpose. To activate his pieces White has to play f3–f4, but f4 is securely held, so it is necessary to deflect the g5-pawn. Such an undermining operation can be used by itself or in conjunction with a pawn break to open or capture lines or important squares. This game is a good illustration of this method. Black's reply is forced and it is then possible to begin an attack on the main point.

41 ... gxf4

42. f4 g5

If 42...exf4, then 43. ♖xf4+ ♔e7 44. e5.

43. fxe5+ ...

Not 43. fxg5+ ♔g6 44. gxh5+ ♘xh5 45. ♙xh5 ♔xh5.

43... dxe5

44. ♘h2 ...

With this move, White not only brings his knight into the game, but also clears f1 for the queen.

44... ♞e6

Black uses tactics to block the f-file. White cannot take the knight because the e4-pawn is undefended.

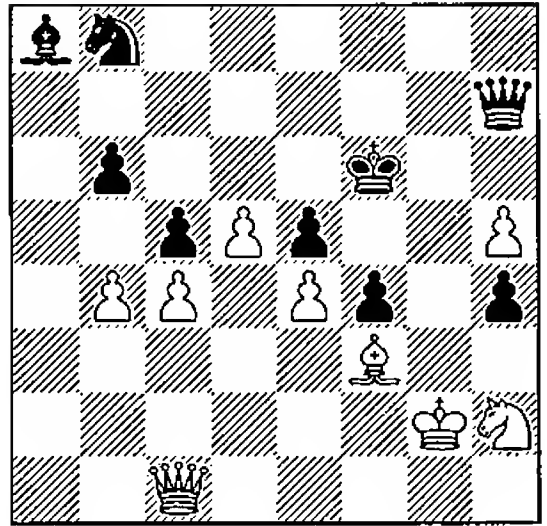
45. gxh5 ♚h7

46. ♙f3 ♞f4+

47. ♘xf4 gxf4

47...exf4 48. ♚b2+ loses at once.

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48. ♚a1! ...

There is no defense to the threat of ♚xa8 followed by ♘g4+. White has conducted the final attack with great energy.

48... h3+

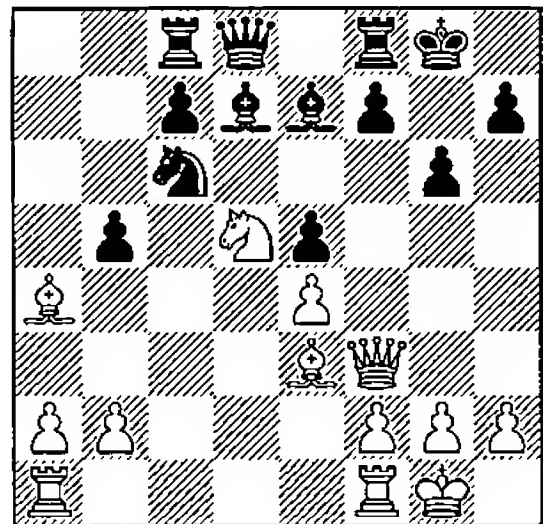
49. ♚xh3 ♙b7

50. ♘g4+ ♚f7

51. ♚xe5 1-0

No. 134: Full Compensation

405



Q. Can White play 16. ♙xb5?

16. ♙xb5! ...

In the game **Keres–Lutikov** (Pärnu 1971), White sacrifices the exchange for two pawns and good attacking prospects.

- 16... ♘d4
17. ♙xd4 ♙xb5
18. ♖xe5 ♙xf1
19. ♖xf1 ...

The variation 19. ♘f6+ ♖xf6 20. ♖xf6 only helps Black after 20... ♔d2. Now Black is practically forced to close the a1-h8 diagonal.

- 19... f6
20. ♖c3 c6
21. ♘f4 ♙f7
22. h4! ...

The direct attack against the black king is very difficult to repel; the threats h4-h5 and e4-e5 are ever-present. Black tries to mount a defense of e5, but White's attack develops faster. One could say that Black's position is practically helpless.

- 22... ♙d6
23. h5 ♙c7

This move loses at once, but it is difficult to suggest anything better. Black could try 23... ♙f4, hoping to hold after 24. ♙f4 gxf5 25. e5 ♙d5 26. exf6 ♖e8. But White has 24. hxf6 hxf6 25. ♙f4 when there is no hope for Black. The move 23...g5 was somewhat better, but after 24. ♘e6 Black's prospects are grim.

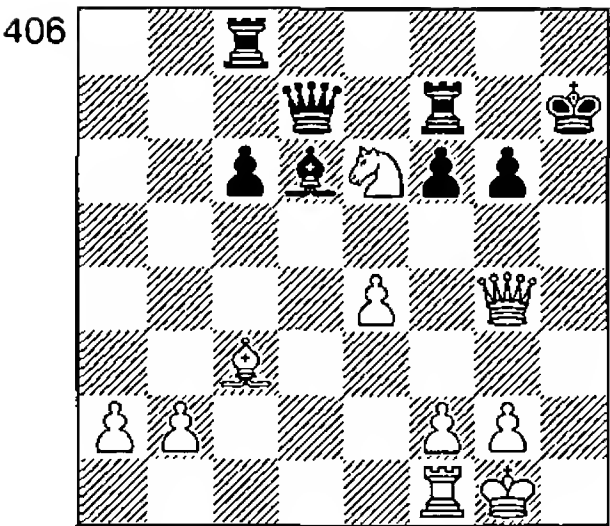
The game move hopes to provoke 24. hxf6 hxf6 25. ♘g6 ♙xh2+ 26. ♔h1 ♖h7, but it doesn't make sense for White to enter into unnecessary complications.

24. ♘e6 ♙d7

After 24... ♙e7 25. hxf6 hxf6 26. ♙g4, Black loses in some variations because the rook on c8 is loose.

25. hxf6 hxf6
26. ♙g4 ♙h7

26...g5 is met by 27. ♙f5.

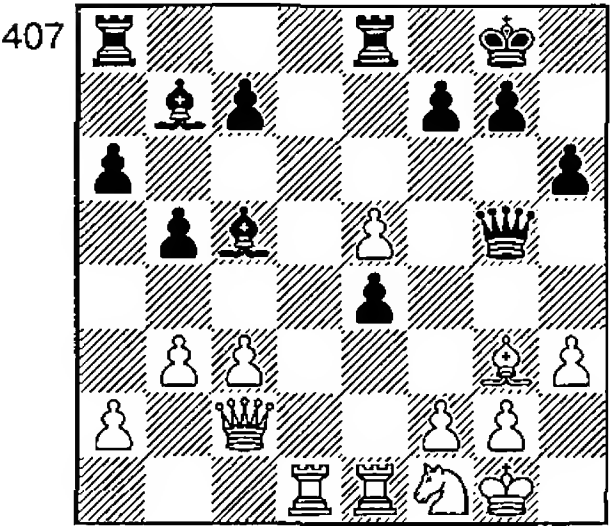


27. ♖xf6 ...

This vigorous strike by the bishop is best. Black cannot play 27... ♖xf6 because of the discovered attack on his queen after 28. ♘g5+.

- 27... ♙f4
28. ♙xf6 1-0

No. 135: An Intuitive Sac



Q. How can Black make the most of the bishop pair?

There is nothing in this position from Martynov–Zlotnik (corr. 1967) to warn of the coming storm. All of White's forces are developed and his king appears safe.

- 23... ♖xe5!

With this unexpected sacrifice, Zlotnik instantly changes the character of the struggle. It is clear that Black could not foresee all the consequences, but in such situations the attacker relies on intuition and imagination. Black is convinced that the bishop pair, supported by the major pieces, should provide strong positional pressure.

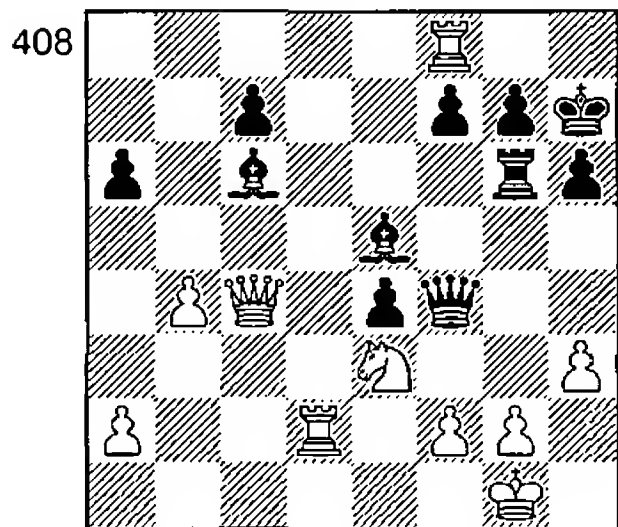
24. ♖xe5 ♔xe5
25. ♖e2 ♖e8
26. b4 ♙d6
27. ♕b3 ♖e6

All of Black's forces are focused on attacking the opponent's king.

28. c4 bxc4 29. ♕xc4 ♖g6 30. ♖d4 ♕g5 31. ♘e3 ♕f4 32. ♖ed2 ♙e5 33. ♖d8+ ♕h7 34. ♖f8

At first glance, it seems as though White has weathered the storm. There are no direct mate threats and the black f7-pawn is under pressure. Yet things are not so simple.

34 ... ♙c6!



The bishop begins to play an important role. The f7-pawn is now poisoned because of the threats that could arise along the a6-f1 diagonal.

35. ♕xa6 ♔h2+
36. ♕f1 ♙c3

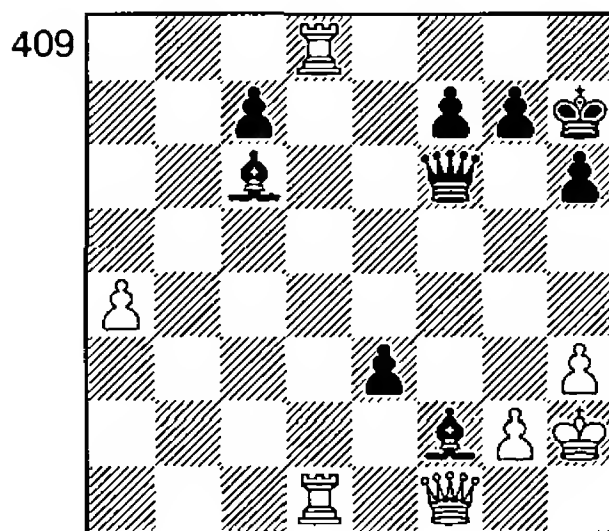
37. ♖d1 ♖d6
38. ♕e2 ♕e5
39. a4 ...

On 39. ♖b8, there follows 39... ♕h5+ 40. g4 ♕xh3 41. ♖xd6 ♕f3+ 42. ♕f1 ♕h1+ 43. ♕e2 ♕e1#.

39... ♙b4 40. ♖d8 ♕b2+ 41. ♕f1 ♖f6 42. ♘g4 ♖e6 43. ♙e3

43...e3 was threatened, followed by winning the queen after ... ♙xg2+.

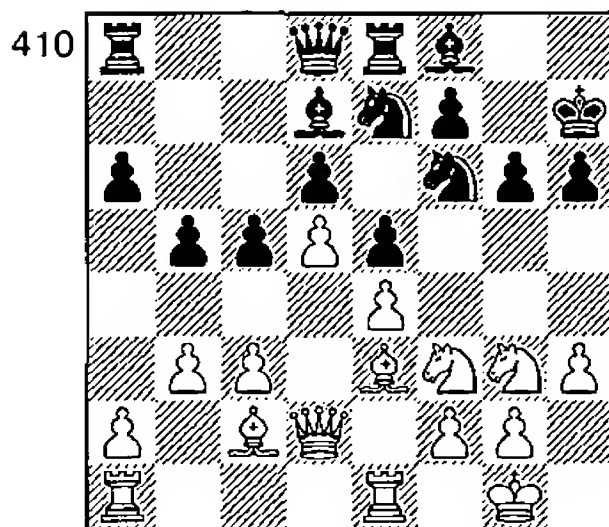
43... ♙c5 44. ♕g1 ♖f6 45. ♘g4 ♙xf2+ 46. ♕h2 e3 47. ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 48. ♕f1:



48... e2! 49. ♕xe2 ♕f4+ 50. ♕h1 ♙xg2+ 51. ♕xg2 ♕g3+ 52. ♕h1 ♕xh3#

White succumbs to checkmate.

No. 136: Is a Rolling Center Worth a Piece?

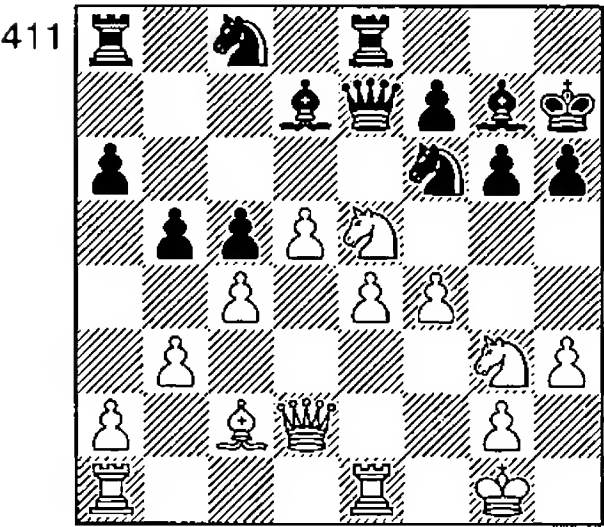


Q. How can White make use of his space advantage?

19. ♖xc5! ...

According to Tal, in *The Life and Games of Mikhail Tal*, this positional sacrifice “owes its existence” to the game Bronstein–Rojahn (Moscow 1956): 1. c4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♖c6 3. ♗c4 ♗f6 4. ♗g5 d5 5. exd5 ♗a5 6. d3 h6 7. ♖f3 e4 8. dxe4! ♗xc4 9. ♔d4, when “the avalanche of white pawns swept away everything in its path.” Tal’s sacrifice, in the game Tal–Ghițescu (Miskolc 1963), is based on the same idea: “White succeeds in setting up a solid pawn roller, and at the first opportunity sets it in motion.”

19 ... dxc5
20. ♖xe5 ♗c8
21. f4 ♔e7
22. c4! ♗g7

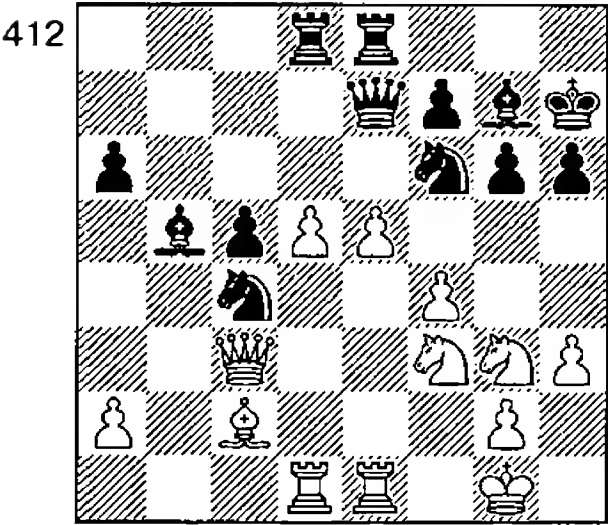


23. ♗f3?! ...

Tal writes, “Hastily played. After the preparatory 23. ♖ad1 ♗d6 24. ♗d3 Black would have been unable, as in the game, to give back the piece successfully.... The premature retreat of the knight allows Black to obtain counterplay.”

23 ... bxc4
24. bxc4 ♗d6

25. e5 ♗xc4
26. ♔c3 ♗b5
27. ♖ad1 ♖ad8



28. d6 ...

This is the best way to win back the piece. Capturing on f6 would lead to a queen trade, which would blunt White’s initiative.

28... ♗xd6
29. exd6 ♔b7

It was better to retreat the queen to f8 to keep an eye on the d6-pawn. In this case, White would have played 30. ♔xc5, whereas now White can think about attacking.

30. ♖e5! ♗d7
31. ♖h5! ♗h8
32. ♔g3 ...

Thanks to his previous move, White can compel an exchange on e5, after which his pawns are connected once again.

32... ♖xe5
33. fxe5 ♔d7

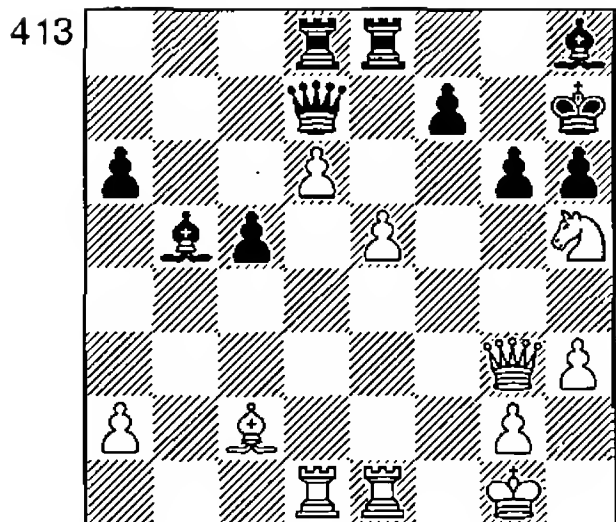
(See Diagram 413)

34. ♖f4! ...

With this simple combination, White achieves a decisive advantage.

34... ♗xe5

34... ♖g8 does not work because of the blow 35. e6!.



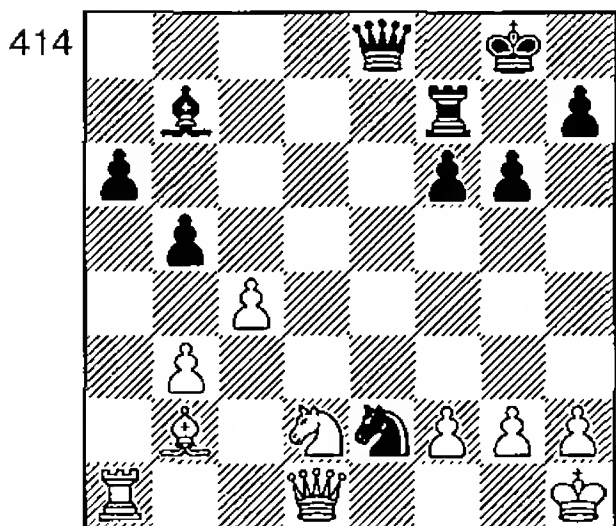
35. ♖xg6+! ♜h8

Upon 35...fxg6, there follows 36. ♖xg6+ ♜h8 37. ♜xe5 ♜xe5 38. ♖f6+.

36. ♖xf7 ♜d4+ 37. ♜xd4 ♜xe1+ 38. ♖xe1 ♖xf7 39. ♖xe5 ♖g7 40. ♖xc5 ♜c6 41. ♜d2 1-0

Black resigned, as Ghițescu realized that further resistance was futile.

No. 137: The Long Diagonal



Q. Suggest a continuation for Black.

In **Lapin–Perfiliev** (corr. 1952), Black's position is preferable, mainly because the unopposed bishop on b7 sweeps down the long diagonal and the other pieces are ready to assist it in an attack. Therefore, Black immediately brings more pressure to bear.

28 ... ♜f4!

29. ♜f3 ...

Shutting down the diagonal by 29. f3 does not help because it weakens the e3 square: 29...♜d7 30. ♜c3 ♖e3.

29 ... ♜xg2!

This sacrifice increases the coordination of Black's remaining pieces.

30. ♖xg2 ♜d7

Black creates threats with every move. This complicates White's defense and gives him more chances to go wrong.

31. ♖c2 ...

On 31. ♖e1, the simple 31...♜xf3+ 32. ♖xf3 ♖a8+ would decide.

31 ... ♖e6

32. h3 ♜xf3+

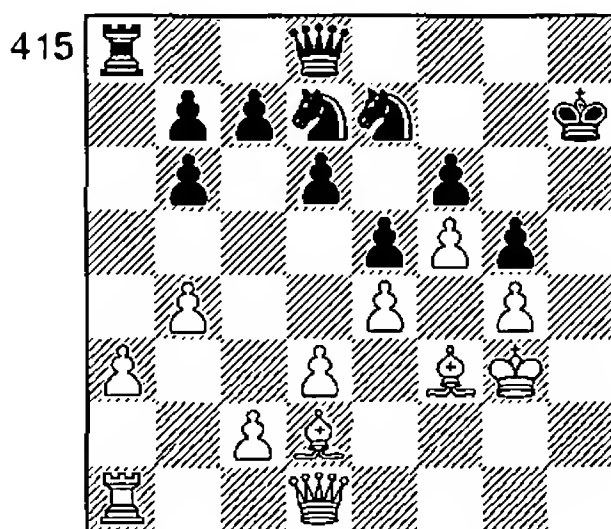
33. ♖g3 ...

If 33. ♖xf3, Black wins by 33... ♖xh3+ 34. ♖e2 ♜e7+ 35. ♖d2 ♖f3.

33 ... ♜e4

0-1

No. 138: The Value and Uses of the Bishop Pair



Q. Evaluate the diagram position and suggest a plan for White.

In this position White has a space advantage and the so-called advantage

of the bishop pair. The two bishops are a powerful positional factor in that together they can control all the squares of the chessboard. But the pieces do not operate in a vacuum. They can be limited by the placement of other forces, both black and white, and this can complicate their functional value. That is why standard piece values must be taken with a grain of salt: everything depends on the position at hand, and a piece's true value more often depends on its ability to interact with its fellow chessmen.

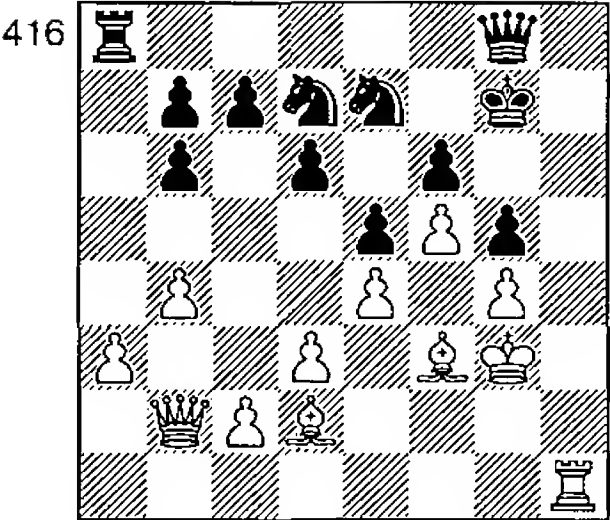
Thus, the value of the two bishops depends on the character of the position, particularly the pawn structure. In an open position, with fewer pawns, the two bishops will be very strong. This advantage is often felt most keenly in endings with pawns on both sides of the board. So, as a rule, the two bishops are stronger than either two knights or a bishop and a knight. As we have said, one benefit of having the bishop pair is the possibility of favorably simplifying the position.

Given all this, we can evaluate the position from the game **Chigorin–Falk** (Russian Championship 1899) as better for White. The game appears blocked, which would seem to favor the knights, but the bishops have enough targets and it is Black's knights that are lacking in scope. White intends to capture the h-file and use it to infiltrate Black's position. It is interesting to see how Chigorin carries out his regrouping for the decisive attack.

28. ♖c1! ...

White uses a tactical threat to carry out a strategic aim! The threat to sacrifice on g5 wins a tempo and enables the queen to watch over the a-pawn.

28 ... ♔g8
29. ♕b2 ♕g7
30. ♖h1 ...



White has executed the first part of his plan: the h-file is captured.

30 ... ♔f8

Given that the flank is unsafe, Black attempts to evacuate his king towards the center. Even though this maneuver did not succeed in this game, it is still worth remembering.

31. c3 ♔e8
32. ♖d1 ...

The bishop is rerouted to the a2–g8 diagonal, where its activity will sharply increase.

32 ... ♖f8
33. ♖b3 ♔g7
34. ♖c1 c6
35. ♖h5 ...

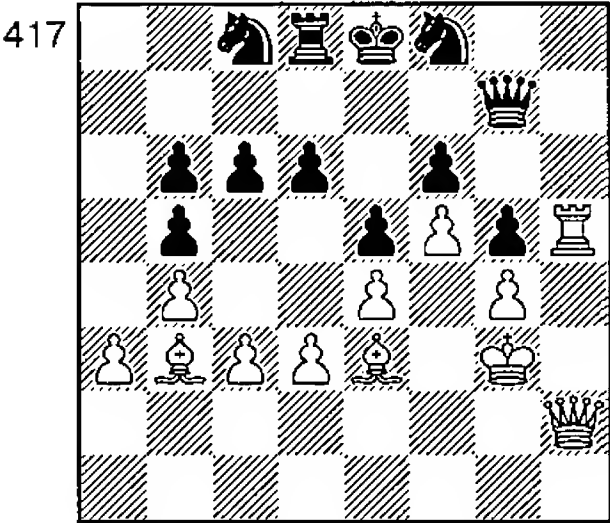
White prepares to have the queen join the attack behind the rook along the h-file.

35 ... ♖d8
36. ♕f2 ♖c8
37. ♖e3 b5
38. ♕h2 ...

Chigorin's piece maneuvers have compelled the enemy pawns to advance. This weakens the seventh rank and gives

White additional chances to break the game open with a3-a4 or c3-c4.

38 ... b6?



As usual, the defender makes a mistake in a difficult situation. In real game conditions, when the time for reflection is constantly decreasing, errors are inevitable. In fact, constricted positions by themselves often bear the germs of defeat. Practice shows that blunders occur more frequently when defending than when attacking. Therefore, it is important for the attacker to keep the opponent under as much pressure as possible. In this game Chigorin demonstrates this skillfully.

Incidentally, it is impossible for one side to win without an error from the opponent. Hence, errors are an integral part of the game, indeed of any human activity. So do not get too upset if you make an error or if your opponent refers to it after the game.

39. ♖e6! ...

After this simple move, it is clear that the b6-pawn is doomed. Black cannot defend the weaknesses at b6 and f6 at the same time – remember the principle of the two weaknesses!

39 ... ♘e7

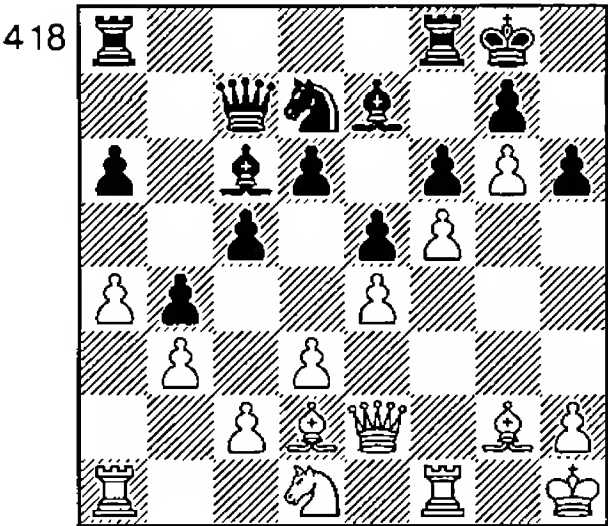
40. ♖xb6 ♘xe6

41. fxe6 ♘g6
42. ♖h7 ♖g8
43. ♖h5 1-0

Black resigned; on 43...♖b8 there follows 44. ♖h8 ♖xh8 45. ♖xg6+ and 46. ♖f7.

In selecting examples for this book, I have tried to categorize them and present games of the same theme or strategic method. The reader can judge the difficulties I have faced in classifying them, for in the game that we just have considered one can find themes of the bishop pair, of the open file, of weak pawns, and the application of the principle of the two weaknesses.

No. 139: The Nail



Q. Determine an object of attack for the white pieces.

In **Chigorin–Klements** (St. Petersburg 1880), White has a clear positional advantage. Material is equal and only one pair of knights has been exchanged, but White has an enormous edge in space. The g6-pawn is a “nail” hammered into Black’s position, and as a result the point h6 is very weak. This puts the black king in an extremely precarious position, thanks es-

pecially to White's dark-squared bishop on the c1-h6 diagonal.

This point will be the focus of White's attack. As Chigorin later explained, "White prepared the decisive blow ♖xh6 for five more moves, and Black cannot prevent it without considerable losses."

20. ♖h5

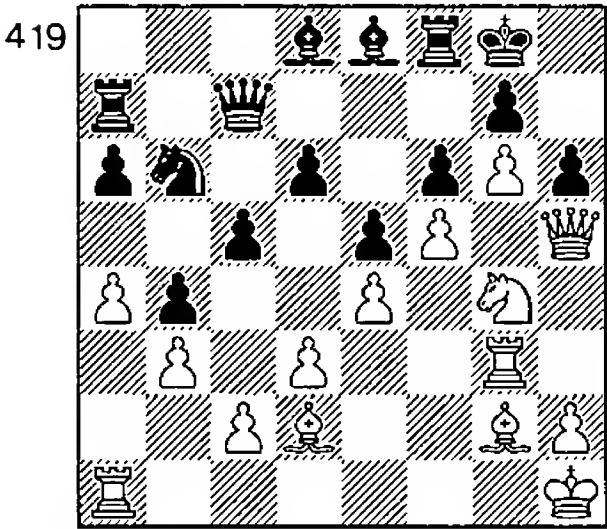
♟b6
21. ♘e3

♞a7
22. ♘g4

♙d8
23. ♞f3

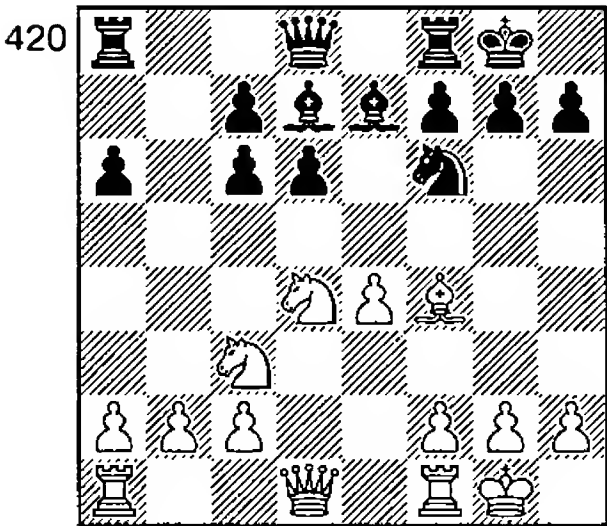
♙e8
24. ♞g3!

1-0



Black resigned, as there is no defense against the intended 25. ♙xh6 gxh6 26. ♘xh6+ ♔g7 27. ♘f7, when checkmate is inevitable.

No. 140: An Inconvenient Thrust



Q. Evaluate the consequences of 11. e5.

11. e5 ...

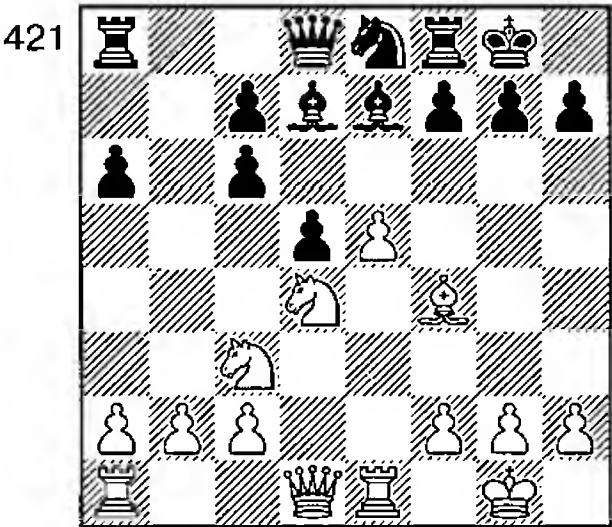
In the game **Gipslis–Kostro** (Dubna 1976), White's bold advance of the center pawn puts Black in a quandary as to how to react. Trading pawns would leave Black with weak isolated c-pawns, while 11... ♘d5 would compromise the pawn structure after White exchanges on d5 and d6. As a result, Black has but one choice.

- 11 ...

♟e8
12. ♞e1

d5

This advance is mistimed because White can occupy the weakened c5 square. Worthy of consideration was 12... ♞b8, when in case of 13. b3 d5 the white knight cannot reach c5 via b3.



13. ♘b3!

a5
14. ♘a4

f6?

It was not necessary to allow the advance of White's center pawn. 14... g6 followed by ... ♘e8-g7 was more tenacious.

15. e6

♙c8
16. ♘d4

♙b7
17. ♞e3!

...

It is known that the player who controls the center can often more quickly mobilize his forces against points of attack. Here h7 is vulnerable, as it can be defended only by the king. Therefore White prepares the rook for a kingside

attack, while the e6-pawn helps to isolate Black's forces from that flank.

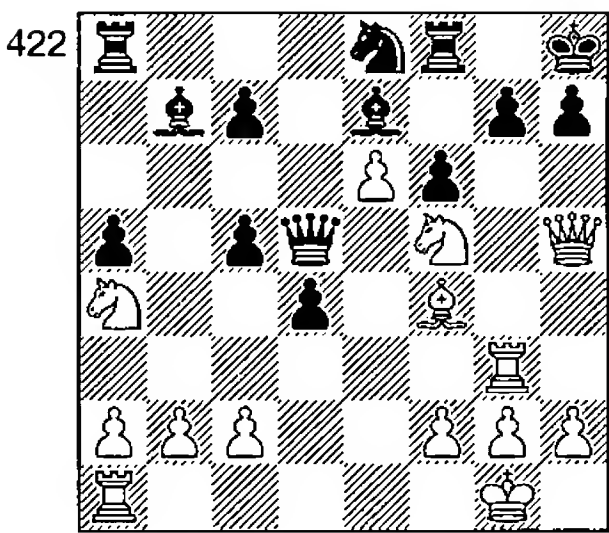
- 17 ...

c5
18. ♘f5

d4
- 18... ♘d6 loses to 19. ♙xd6 cxd6 20. ♖g3 g6 21. ♙h5 ♙e8 22. ♙h6.
19. ♖g3

♙h8
20. ♙h5

♙d5



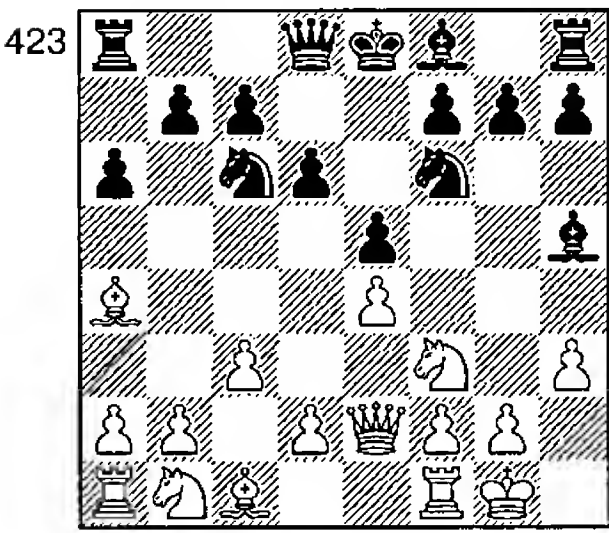
Black pins his hopes on the fact that the f5-knight is pinned and that White cannot reinforce the attack by ♖h3, as the rook must defend g2. However, White breaks through nonetheless.

21. ♙xh7+!

♙xh7
22. ♖h3+

♙g6
23. ♘xe7#

**No. 141:
Another Surprising Queen Sac**



Q. Suggest a plan for Black.

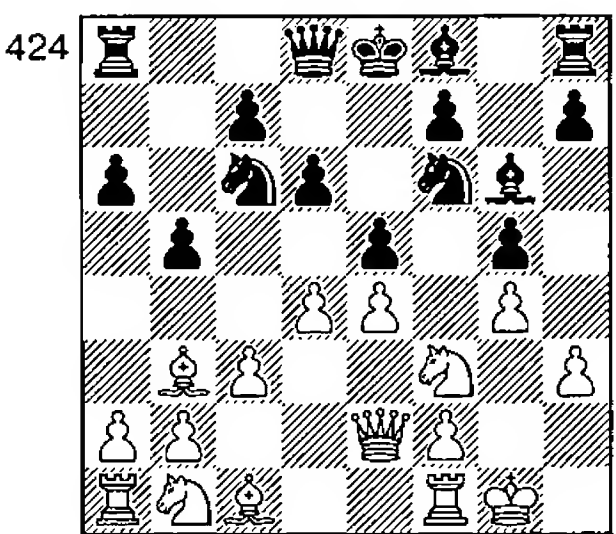
8 ... g5!
The game Čirić—Nezhmetdinov (Rostov-on-Don 1961) provides another example of a flank attack.

9. g4

b5
10. ♙b3

♙g6
11. d4

...



11 ... h5!
White cannot have expected this beautiful move. Black tries to open files on the kingside.

12. ♙xg5?! ...
Stronger was 12. ♘xg5! hxg4 13. hxg4 ♙d7 14. f3, trying to prop up the defenses on the kingside, but White fails to foresee Black's coming moves.

- 12...

hxg4
13. ♘h4

...

Perhaps it was best to take the pawn, as 13. hxg4 ♙d7 is met by 14. ♘xe5! dxe5 15. ♙xf6 (Pishkin).

- 13 ...

♙h5
14. ♙d5

...

(See Diagram 425)

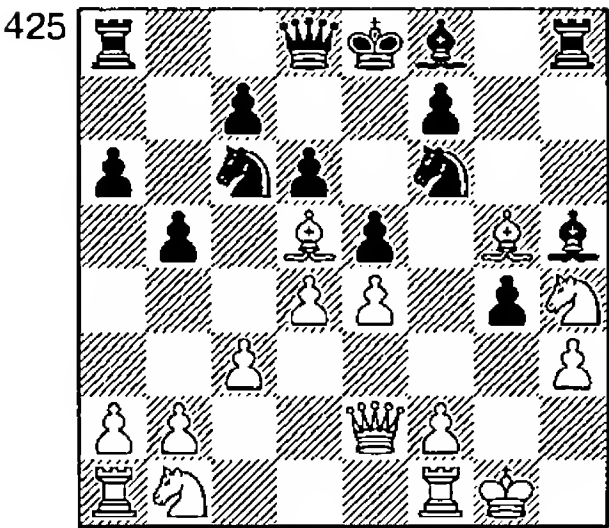
- 14 ...

♘xd5!

Though this sacrifice is not new, it is always admirable!

15. ♙xd8

♘f4



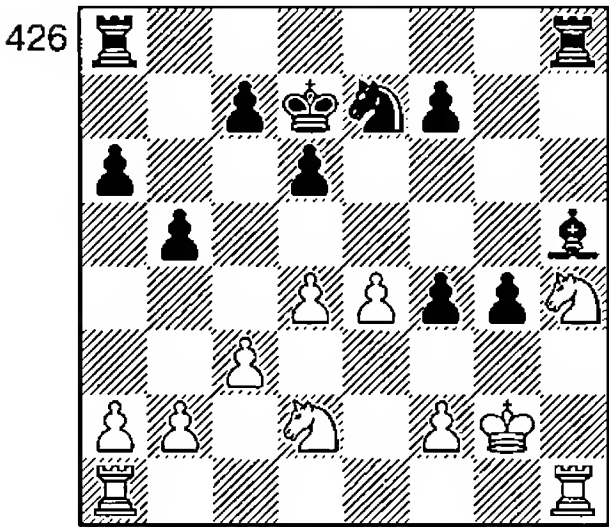
16. ♖e3 ♜xh3+
17. ♜g2 ♜f4+
18. ♖xf4 ...

White tries to return the material to beat back the attack. Pishkin shows that 18. ♜g3 ♖xd8 19. ♜h1! was necessary.

18 ... exf4
19. ♜g5 ...

The c7-pawn is poisoned: 19. ♜xc7 ♜d7 20. ♜b6 ♜b8.

19 ... ♜e7
20. ♜xe7 ♜xe7
21. ♜d2 ♜d7
22. ♜h1 ...



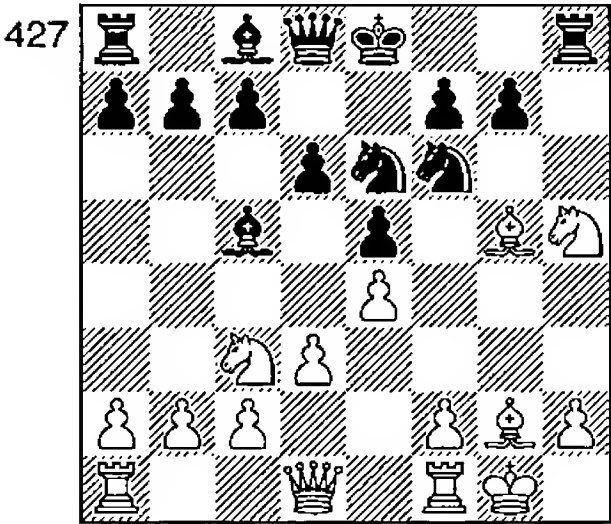
22 ... f6!

Once the bishop is activated, there is no hope for White.

23. b3 ♜f7 24. d5 ♜h6 25. ♜h2 ♜ah8 26. ♜ah1 ♜xd5! 27. exd5 ♜xd5+ 28. f3 g3! 0-1

White resigned, as 29. ♜h3 ♜e6 is convincing.

This sacrificial theme occurs from time to time in tournament practice. Let me present one more example, from the game J. Augustin–Nunn (European Team Championship 1977).



In the diagram position, there followed 11. ♜xg7+ ♜xg7 12. ♜d5. White anticipated only 12... ♜gh5 13. ♜xf6 ♜xf6 14. ♜f3 with an excellent position.

12... ♜xd5! 13. ♜xd8 ♜f4 14. ♜g5
If 14. ♜f6, then 14... ♜g8.

14... ♜ge6 15. ♜xf4 ♜xf4 16. ♜h1 ♜e6 17. ♜f3 ♜h4 18. ♜g1 ♜e7 19. ♜g2

Black's pieces dominate the king-side. After 19. ♜g4, very strong is 19... ♜ah8.

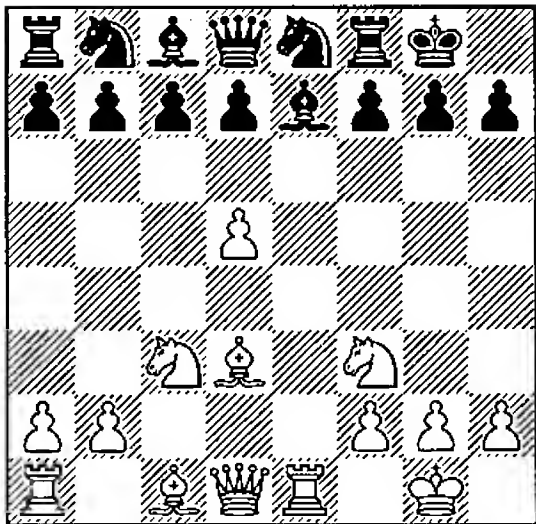
19... ♜xg2 20. ♜xg2 ♜ah8 21. ♜d2 ♜xh2+ 22. ♜g1 ♜h4 23. ♜e1 ♜g8 24. ♜e3

White desperately tries to protect his king. After 24. ♜f1, decisive is 24... ♜h2.

24... ♜xe3 25. ♜xe3 ♜h3 26. ♜f1 ♜xg2+ 27. ♜e2 c5 28. ♜d2 b6 29. ♜c3 ♜f4 30. ♜a3 a5 31. ♜b3 ♜h3 32. f3 ♜g2+ 33. ♜e3 ♜g4 0-1

No. 142: The Obstructive Sacrifice

428



Q. Suggest a way for White to develop his initiative.

12. d6! ...

In the game **B.Stein–Langeweg** (Plovdiv 1983), White offers to sacrifice a second pawn to further his initiative. One purpose is to vacate d5 for the queen's knight to join in the attack. At the same time, White blocks the development of the opponent's light-squared bishop. Thus, we could call this an "obstructive sacrifice."

12... cxd6

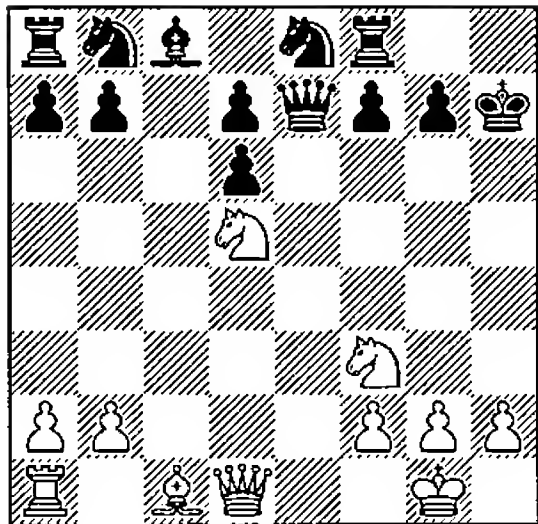
The idea for this sacrifice dates back to 1897! The game **Hjumzen–Bredy** saw 12... cxd6 13. e4 e8, when White had the opportunity to conduct a beautiful combination: 14. exh7+! xh7 15. ex7 x7 16. d5 d8 17. g5+ g6 18. d3 f5 19. g3 and Black is defenseless.

13. exh7+! ...

The weakest point in the game prior to castling is the square f7 (or f2). After castling, the square h7 (or h2) becomes the weakest point, as it is often only defended by the king.

13 ... xh7
14. ex7 x7
15. d5 1-0

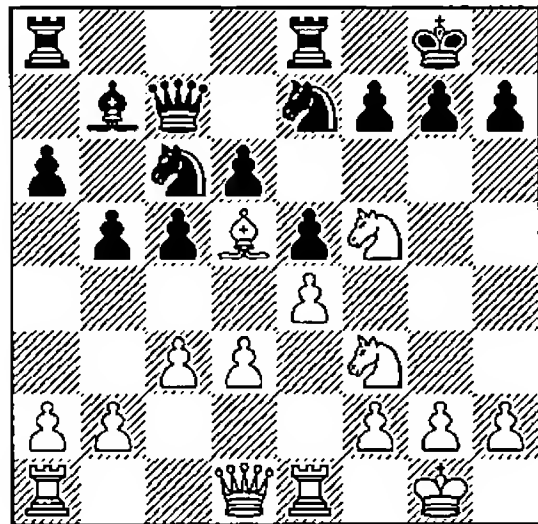
429



Black resigned in this position. The most colorful continuation is 15... d8 16. g5+ g6 17. g4 f5 18. h4 f4 (18... f6 19. f4#) 19. h7+ xg5 20. h4+ g4 21. f3+ g3 22. d2 h4 23. e1#. The experienced Dutch international master spent two hours and five minutes deliberating on his moves, while White used only fifteen minutes. Stein quipped after the game that apparently his opponent did not know his theory.

No. 143: Local Superiority

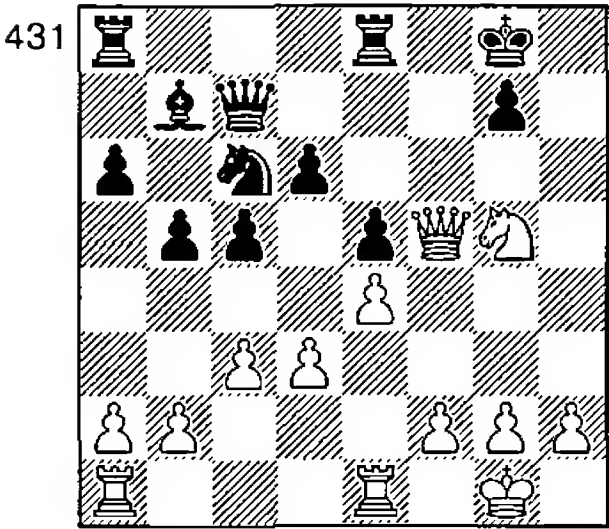
430



Q. Suggest an active continuation for White.

Material is equal in **Teichmann–Schlechter** (Karlsbad 1911), but Black’s forces are concentrated on the queen-side, while White has a preponderance of forces in the center. White uses his greater mobility to crush his opponent with a combination.

19. ♔xf7+! ♚xf7
20. ♖g5+ ♚g8
- 20... ♚f6 is no better: 21. ♖xh7+ ♚f7 22. ♖g5+ ♚f6 23. ♖xg7.
21. ♚h5 ♖xf5
22. ♚xh7+ ♚f8
23. ♚xf5+ ♚g8
- Or 23... ♚e7 24. ♚e6+.



24. ♚g6! ...

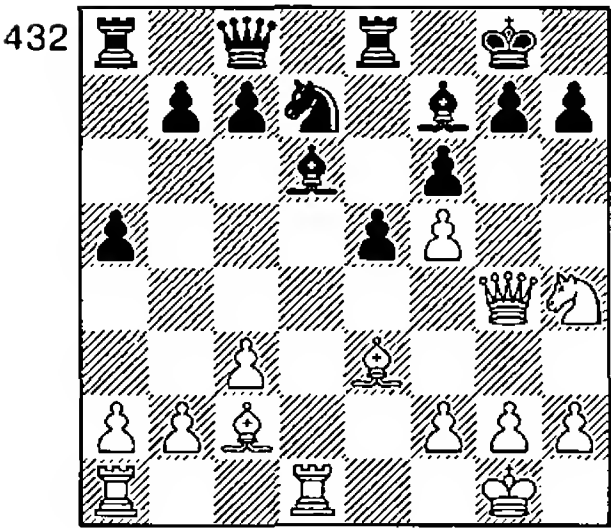
This quiet move completes the attack. To deliver the final blow it is necessary to bring the rook into action. But 24. ♚e3 at once is met by 24...g6 25. ♚xg6+ ♚g7, when Black defends h7 and can call in the reserves for defense.

24 ... ♚d7

25. ♚e3 1-0

It is interesting to note that all five of White’s centrally posted units took part in the attack, and that White achieved success even without a pre-existing weakness in Black’s castled position.

No. 144:
Removing the Key Defender



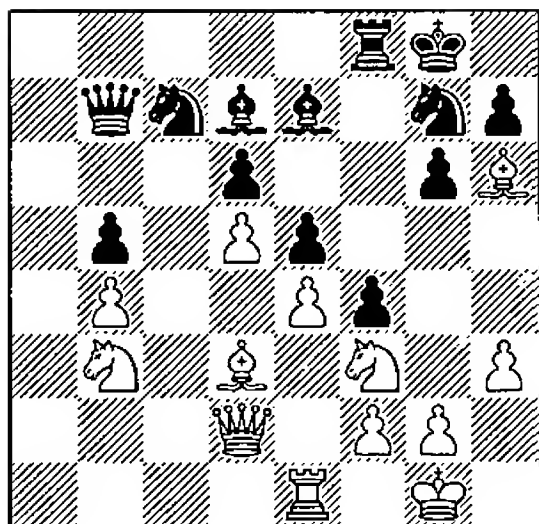
Q. Find a way for White to continue the attack.

In the game **Gorelov–I. Kalinsky** (USSR Championship 1981), White evidently seeks to attack on the kingside. However, it does not make sense to play 20. ♔h6 in view of 20... ♔f8.

20. ♖xd6! ...
- Removing the defender of Black’s dark squares destroys Black’s resistance.
- 20 ... cxd6
21. ♔h6 ♚f8
22. ♚xg7+ ♚e7
23. ♔b3 ...
- The pin on the a2–g8 diagonal is fatal.
- 23 ... ♖f8
24. ♚xh7 ♚e8
25. ♔xf8 ♖xf8
- After 25... ♔b3 there follows 26. ♚e7#.
26. ♚xf7+ 1-0

No. 145: A Knight's Tour

433



Q. Evaluate the diagram position and suggest a plan for White.

In the game **Tal—Hjartarson** (Reykjavík 1987), the position is similar to what can arise from a King's Indian Defense; however, it came about via Chigorin's Variation of the Ruy López. Such "cross-pollination" of openings is characteristic of contemporary chess. Strategically, White has a notable advantage: the c6-square and open c-file are under White's control; the b4-pawn is much stronger than its neighbor on b5; and almost all of White's pieces are ready for action on the queenside. Even the h6-bishop helps to restrict Black's forces.

29. ♖a5 ♜b6

30. ♜c1 ...

White not only places the rook on an important open file, he also sets a trap for the opponent. If Black now moves the rook to c8, White will immediately play his queen to the c-file, hoping that the Icelandic grandmaster will move his knight away from c7, when a queen sacrifice on c8 then follows. Thereby, White will eliminate Black's

one good piece — the light-squared bishop.

30 ... ♜a8

White would like to trade light-squared bishops, but to do this it is necessary to play the bishop to e2, the knight away from f3, and the bishop to g4. However, this would give Black time to play ... ♖h5, with the idea of ... ♖g3. Therefore, White plays on the queenside for now.

31. ♜c2 ♖ce8

32. ♜b3 ...

If given the opportunity, White will sacrifice the knight on e5.

32 ... ♖f6

33. ♖c6 ♖h5

34. ♜b2 ...

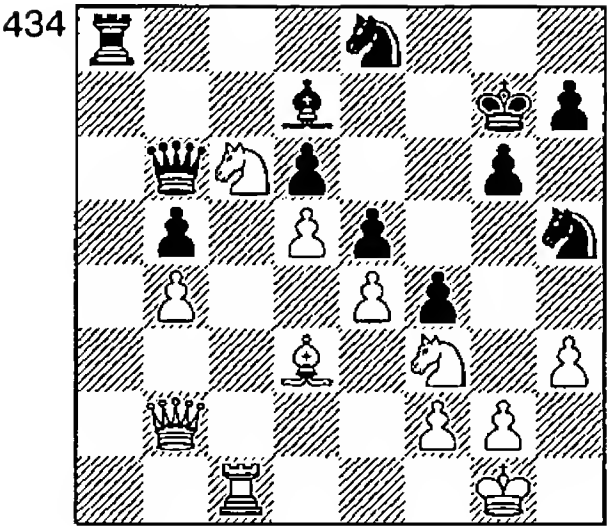
Unfortunately for White, 34. ♖fxe5 does not work because of 34... ♖xe5 (not 34... dxe5 35. d6+ ♖h8 36. ♜f7) 35. ♖xe5 dxe5 36. d6+ ♖h8 37. ♜d5 ♜d6. With the game move, Tal defends the f2-pawn and prepares to play his king to h2 followed by relocating the knight from f3.

34 ... ♖g7

It is dangerous to allow the white bishop to remain so close to the king.

35. ♖xg7 ♜xg7

Both knight recaptures have drawbacks, but either would have been better than the move actually played. 35... ♖hxg7 is very passive and leaves Black no attacking prospects, while White can play ♖h2, ♖e2 and ♖g4. If Black plays ...h7-h5 to cover g4, then the knight can return to f3, aiming for g5. But if 35... ♖exg7, then after 36. ♖h2 the threat 37. ♜e2 practically forces Black to drop a pawn.



36. ♖c5! ...
36. ♗fxe5 dxe5 37. ♗xe5 ♔f6
doesn't work.
36 ... ♔a6
The consequences of 36...dxc5 are clear: 37. ♗fxe5 ♔g8 38. ♗xd7 ♔a6 when 39. bxc5 wins. And it is impossible to defend the pawn by 36...♗c7 because of 37. ♗cxe5. Therefore, Black prefers to counterattack.
37. ♖xb5 ♗c7

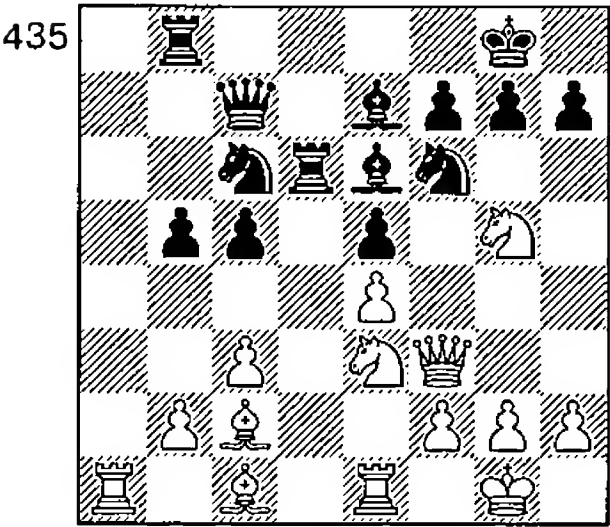
The preliminary exchange on c6 achieves nothing: 37...♗xc6 38. dxc6 ♗c7 39. ♖a5 ♔xc6 40. ♗xe5 dxe5 41. ♔xe5+ followed by 42. ♖c5, when White keeps enough of an edge to win. But now it is all over.

38. ♖b8 ♔xd3
39. ♗cxe5 ♔d1+
40. ♔h2 ♖a1
41. ♗g4 ♔f7
42. ♗h6+ ♔e7
43. ♗g8+ 1-0

Black resigned (43...♔f7 44. ♗g5#). In his annotations to this game, Tal wrote, “remember the route of the principal hero of this game: ♗b1-d2-f1-e3-c2-a1-b3-a5-c6-e5-g4-h6-g8. Not bad, is it?” Though this fearless knight leaped all over the board and contributed greatly to the

success of its army, it was its brother that was to deliver the *coup de grâce*, almost as if it spent the entire game in ambush.
Can anyone claim now that chess is simply a game and bears no relation to life?

No. 146: The Initiative



Q. How can White develop his initiative?

In **Rauzer–Ryumin** (Leningrad 1936), White seeks to further develop his initiative. Capablanca described the initiative as time and activity. We will interpret it as *the timely deployment of pieces and pawns in connection with the ability to make threats*. Basically, it prepares and develops the conditions for an attack. Possession of the initiative means that the player with the move has the opportunity to implement his ideas or make use of tactical motifs. Thus, each active move in a game that advances a particular idea or long-range plan represents an aspect of the initiative.

The initiative is such an important factor that players are often willing to sacrifice material (e.g., a pawn) to achieve it. In this respect we can say that an attack is the product of a long-term

initiative provided by a strategic plan in which the interaction of one's forces increases move by move.

19. ♖f5! ...

Maneuvering a knight to f5 is a common theme for White in the Spanish Game. Black usually discourages this with the prophylactic move ...g7-g6 or, as in this case, exchanges the dangerous knight.

19 ... ♙xf5

20. exf5 ...

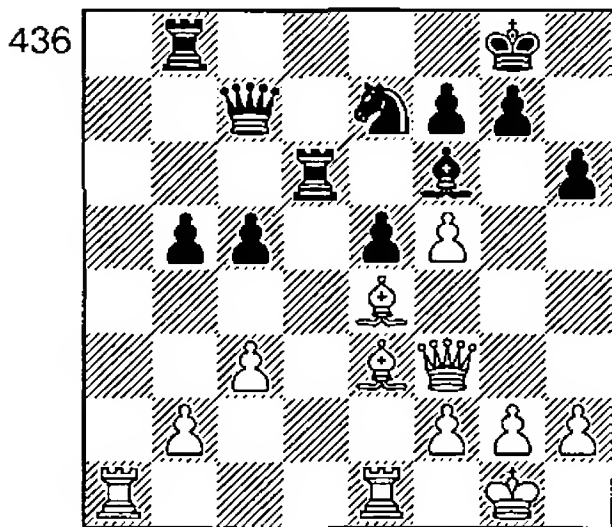
White's knight may have been traded off, but now White has the preconditions for a pawn storm on the kingside in which his light-squared bishop will play a considerable role.

20 ... h6

21. ♖e4 ♙xe4

22. ♙xe4 ♙f6

23. ♙e3 ♙e7



24. b4! ...

It was necessary to stop the black rook from becoming active after ...b5-b4. In addition, this way the scope of White's dark-squared bishop is extended.

24 ... c4

25. g3 ♖d7

26. ♖a7 ♙d8

27. ♖xd7 ♙xd7

28. h4 ♙h8

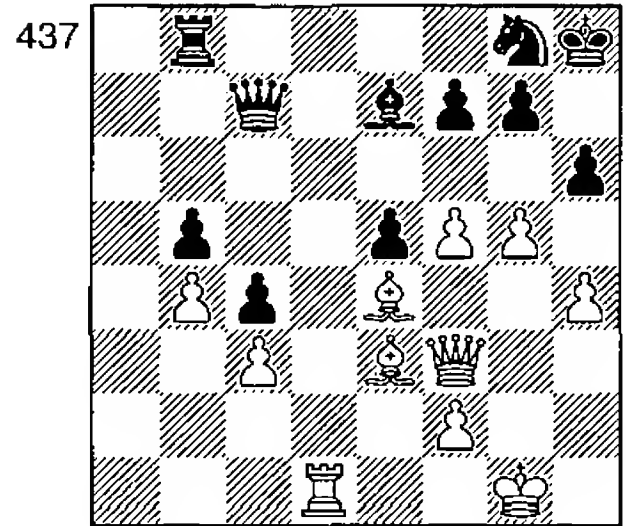
29. g4! ...

White exchanged one pair of rooks to prevent counterplay on the central file; now he launches the pawn storm. Black cannot take the pawn in view of 29...♙xh4 30. ♙h3 ♙f6 31. g5 with material gain for White as well as an ongoing attack.

29 ... ♙g8

30. g5 ♙e7

31. ♖d1 ♙c7

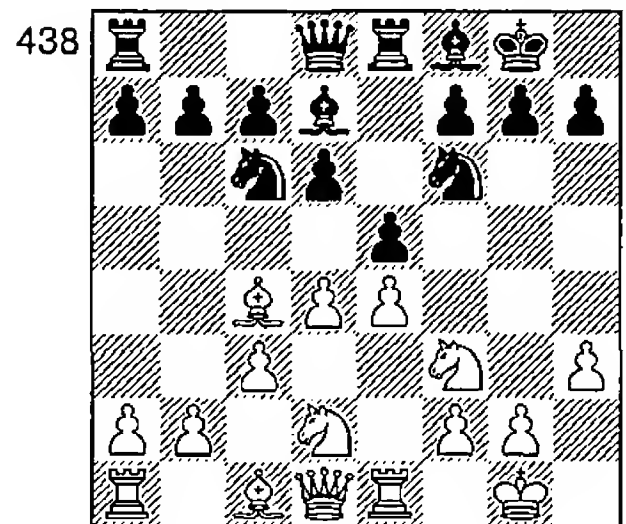


32. f6 ...

The "sleeping" bishop awakens and Black is lost.

32...♙xf6 33. gxf6 ♙xf6 34. ♙c2 ♖d8 35. ♙xh6 ♖xd1+ 36. ♙xd1 e4 37. ♙f4 ♙d8 38. ♙e2 1-0

No. 147: The Effect of Surprise Moves



Q. In the diagram position, evaluate the continuation 10...exd4 11. cxd4 d5.

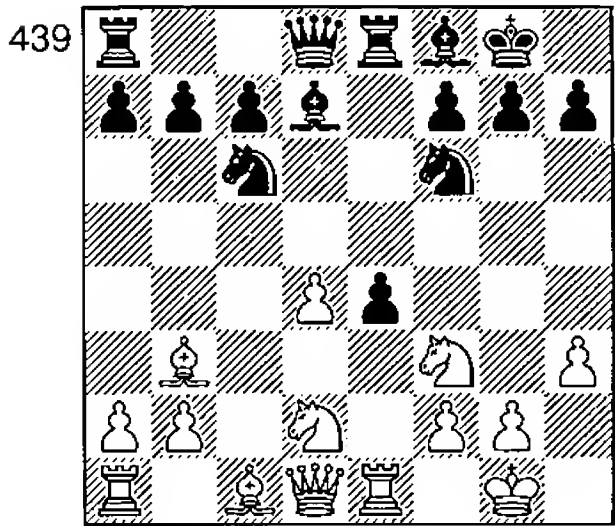
In the game **Kupreichik–Planinec** (Sombor 1970), it would seem that Black chose natural moves in this position.

10 ... exd4
11. cxd4 d5

A feature of contemporary opening systems is their internal dynamism, which, as a rule, makes for a complicated and aggressive struggle. Many variations that were previously considered as primarily positional in nature have been reevaluated in light of newly discovered tactical twists and turns. Sudden explosive piece attacks directed at the opponent's king during the transition from the opening into the middlegame, or in the early middlegame, are another feature of modern-day systems.

As we have seen, many tactical motifs are part and parcel of the deepest strategic plans. And, of course, methods of dynamic attack go far beyond this or that tactical operation. Now, let us consider the position at hand. Black counted on the natural answer 12. exd5 ♖xe1+ 13. ♗xe1 ♜b4, which leads to excellent play for Black. However, something unexpected happened instead.

12. ♖b3! dxe4



13. ♗xf7+!? ...

Such surprising twists can psychologically influence an opponent. They can affect a player's fighting spirit as there is increased risk with every move. The continuation 13. ♜g5 ♗e6 14. ♗xe6 fxe6 leads only to equal play.

13 ... ♗x f7
14. ♗b3 ♗g6?

The psychological effect of unanticipated attacks can also lead to errors in defense. Necessary was 14...♗e6 15. ♜g5+ ♗g8 16. ♗xe6 ♜a5 17. ♜xd8 ♜xb3 18. axb3 ♖exd8 19. ♗xe4 ♖xd4 with equality.

15. ♜h4+ ♗h5
16. ♗xe4! ...

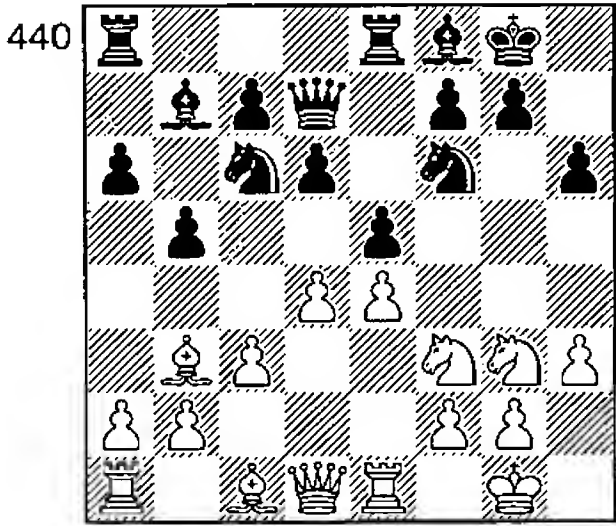
The decisive blow! In connection with the threat of 17. ♗b5+, Black's king faces an overwhelming attack.

16... ♖xe4
17. ♖xe4 g5

Or 17...♜xe4 18. ♗f3+ ♗xh4 19. ♗xe4+ ♗h5 20. ♗h7#.

18. ♗f7+ ♗h6 19. ♜f5+! 1-0

No. 148: A Snap Attack



Q. Choose between 14. dxe5 and 14. a4.

14. dxe5! ...

This energetic move was made in the game **Geller–Portisch** (Moscow 1967). After 14. a4 ♖a5 15. ♖c2 exd4 16. cxd4 c5, a difficult struggle would ensue, with only a small positional plus for White.

14 ... dxe5

If 14... ♖xe5, White has excellent prospects on the kingside with 15. ♖xe5 dxe5 16. ♖f3!, when the initiative is firmly in his hands. White threatens both 17. ♖xh6 and 17. ♖f5.

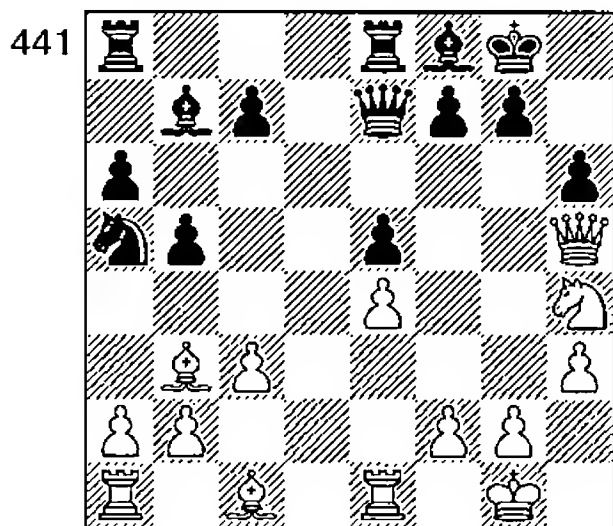
15. ♖h5! ♖e7

Black has no wish to enter a vastly inferior ending after 15... ♖xd1 16. ♖xf6+. However, it was objectively the better plan, as now a series of tactical blows quickly decides the struggle.

16. ♖h4! ♖xh5

17. ♖xh5 ♖a5?

Black misses White's idea and loses immediately. However, even after 17... ♖d8 White maintains all the threats with 18. ♖f3!.



18. ♖g5! ...

The bishop is immune: 18... hxc5 19. ♖g6! or 18... ♖xc5 19. ♖xf7+ ♖h7 20. ♖g8#. There is no defense against the coordinated assault by White's pieces.

18 ... ♖d7

19. ♖ad1 ♖d6

20. ♖xh6 gxh6

Or 20... ♖b3 21. ♖xg7 ♖xg7 22. ♖f5+.

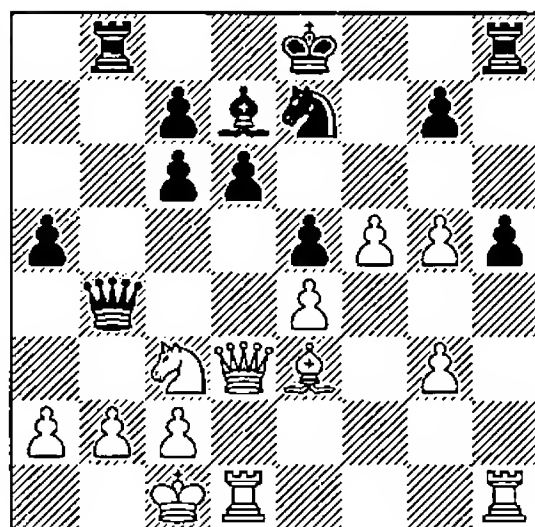
21. ♖g6+ ♖f8

22. ♖f6 ♖g8

23. ♖e3 1-0

No. 149: Take My Pawn

442



Q. Suggest a way for White to continue.

This position, from the game **Yudovich–Sokolsky** (corr. 1965), presages a very sharp struggle. Black's king is stuck in the center and practically doomed to remain there. But the position of White's king seems dangerous as well since Black is threatening the unpleasant ... ♖xb2+. What should White do?

20. a3! ...

This unexpected move is extremely unpleasant for Black; his queen is kicked aside and White's attack becomes irresistible.

20 ... ♖xb2+

21. ♖d2 ♖b7

White was threatening 22. ♖b1. If 21... ♖xa3, then 22. ♖a1 ♖b4 23. ♖hb1 wins the queen.

22. ♖b1 ♖a8

23. ♖xb8+ ♖xb8

24. g4 d5

This attempt to create counterplay is in vain. 24...h4 is bad, too, because of 25. g6 when the bishop goes to g5. In case of 24...g6, there is the very strong 25. f6.

25. ♖c5 d4

26. ♜a4! ...

This is the most accurate: all of Black's pieces are paralyzed. After 26. ♜e2, Black could still offer resistance with 26...♚b5.

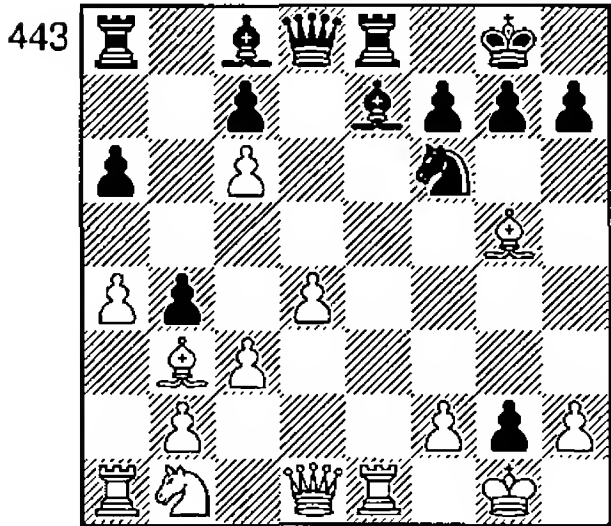
26 ... h4

On 26...♚b5 there follows 27. ♚g3.

27. ♚g3 1-0

Black resigned, as the variations 27...hxc3 28. ♚xh8+ ♜f7 29. ♚xb8 g2 30. ♚b1, or 27...♜g6 28. fxg6, are conclusive.

No. 150: Pin to Win



Q. Suggest a continuation for White.

14. ♚f3! ...

In the game **Yudasin–Plachetka** (Trnava 1983), White creates multiple pins on the f6-knight in connection with e7 and f7. He thinks not only of defense, but also about an attack on the king.

14 ... ♖g4

15. ♚xg2 ♖f5

16. ♜d2 ...

In the given position, the white knight has the route d2–c4–e5 and White is not worried about the opening of the b-file.

16 ... bxc3

If Black intended to move the rook to b8, it was better to do it right away; for example, 16...♚b8 17. ♖a2 ♖g6 18. ♜c4 b3. But the best plan was to play 16...♖g6, inhibiting 17. ♜c4 in view of 17...♖e4, when after 18. ♚xe4 ♜xe4 19. ♚xe4 ♖xg5 20. ♜e5 ♚e7, White has compensation for the material, but nothing more.

After 17. ♚e5 ♖d6 18. ♚xe8+ ♚xe8 19. ♖xf6 gxf6 20. ♜c4 or 19. ♜c4 ♖e4 20. ♜xd6 cxd6 21. ♚g3 White keeps an edge, but the position remains very complicated.

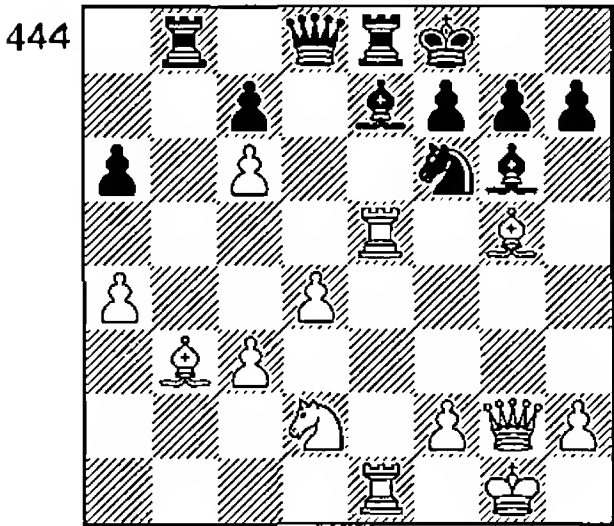
Incidentally, 16...bxc3 17. bxc3 does not spoil anything for Black, which bolsters the maxim that, “a move is nothing, the plan is everything.”

17. bxc3 ♚b8

18. ♚e5! ♖g6

19. ♚ae1 ♜f8

After 19...♜h8, there follows the extremely inconvenient move 20. ♚h3.



20. h4! ...

White threatens 21. h5 ♖d3 22. h6.

20 ... ♜g8

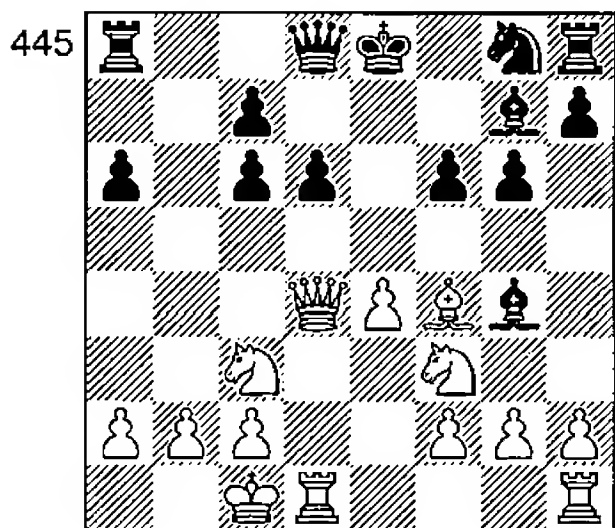
21. ♚f3! ...

Targeting the weakness at f7.

21 ... f6
 22. h5 g5
 23. ♖xh5 ♖xb3
 Or 23...g6 24. ♔h6+, checkmating.
 24. ♜xb3 fxe5
 25. ♞c5 1-0

There is no defense from checks on d7 or e6. The variation 25...♞xg5 26. ♞d7+ ♔e7 27. ♖xe5+ ♔d6 28. ♖xe8 ♞f6 29. ♖h2+ is quite convincing.

No. 151: Attacking the King in the Center



Q. How can White develop an attack?

11. e5! ...

In the game Ozsváth–Smejkal (Budapest 1970), White breaks in the center because if the position is opened, the black king comes under fire from all of White's pieces. Black did his best to prevent this break by pinning the white knight on the last move.

11 ... ♞xf3

No better for Black are 11...fxe5 12. ♞xe5, or 11...dxe5 12. ♖c4 ♞d7 13. ♖xd7 ♖xd7 14. ♖d1.

12. exd6! ♞xd1

13. ♖e1+ ♔f8

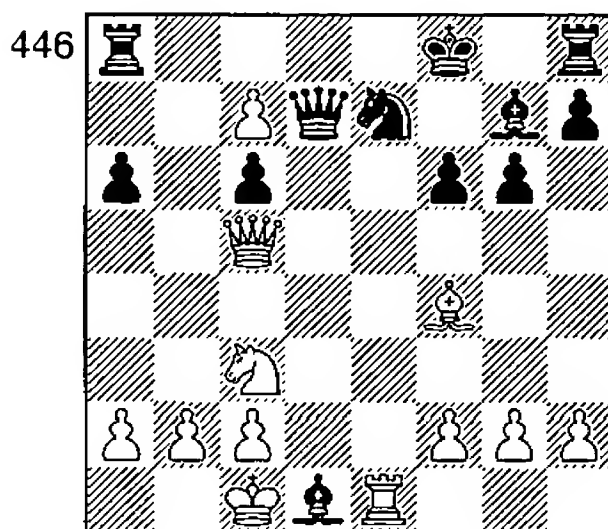
14. ♖c5! ...

White threatens 15. dxc7+, though even without this White's offensive is very dangerous. Smejkal opts to give up his queen to dampen White's attack, but the black king finds no shelter.

14 ... ♔d7

15. dxc7+ ♞e7

In case of 15...♔f7, White had prepared 16. ♖c4+ ♔f8 17. ♖b4+ ♔f7 18. ♖b3+ ♔f8 19. ♖b8+ ♔f7 20. ♖d1 when Black cannot hold back the pressure.



16. ♖xe7! ♖xe7

17. ♞d6 ♔f7

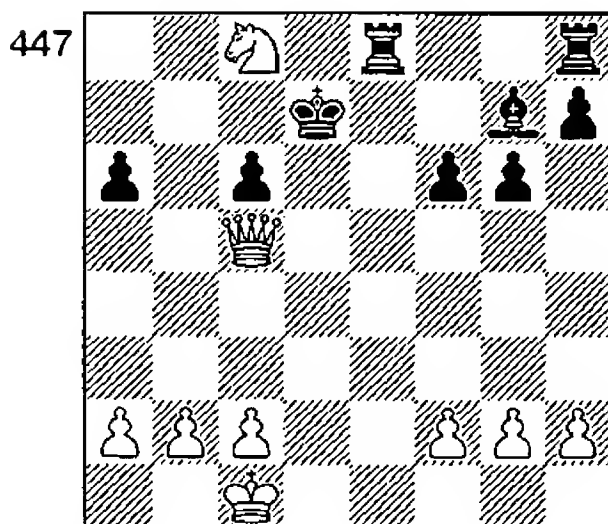
18. ♞xe7 ♞g4

19. ♞e4 ♖ae8

20. c8 ♖xc8

21. ♞d6+ ♔xe7

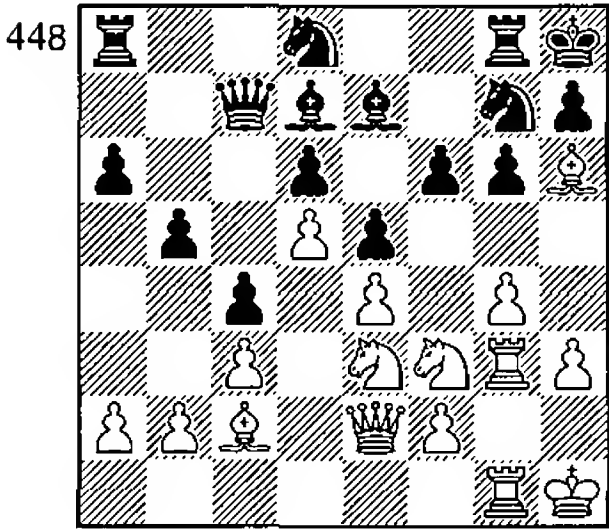
22. ♞xc8+ ♔d7



White's combination is complete, but the black king is still in danger. Now White will target the a6-pawn and advance on the queenside to decide the battle.

23. ♖b6+ ♔c7 24. ♘d5+ ♔d7 25. ♘b4 ♙h6+ 26. ♔d1 ♖e6 27. ♚a7+ ♔d6 28. ♚b6 ♖c8 29. ♘xa6 ♖e5 30. ♘b4 ♙f8 31. ♚a6 ♖c7 32. ♘d3 ♖e8 33. ♔b4 ♔d7 34. ♙a4 ♙d6 35. ♔b5 ♖b8 36. ♔b6 ♖cc8 37. ♚a7+ ♔e6 38. ♔b7 ♖d8 39. ♙a5 c5 40. ♙a6 c4 41. ♚b6 cxd4 42. ♙a7 1-0

No. 152: Pressing the Attack



Q. Suggest a way for White to press the attack.

22. ♘f5! ♙f8

In this early game by Russian GM Alexey Suetin as Black, White has a space advantage and has concentrated his forces on the kingside. Given that the center is closed, Black faces a laborious defense. Since Black refused to capture the knight, let's get acquainted with the variations that White considered during the game.

In case of 22...gxf5 23. gxf5 ♙f8 24. ♘h4!, the only move is 24...♙e8!. (24...♘f7? loses to 25. ♚h5! when the

knight sacrifice on g6 decides the game) 25. ♙d2 ♘f7 26. ♚f3! and White has a strong attack, while Black's pieces are very poorly placed. It would be premature to sacrifice the second knight with 26. ♘xg6+? because of 26...hxxg6 27. fxxg6 ♘h6 28. ♙xh6 ♘f5 29. ♙xf8 ♘xg3+ 30. ♚xg3 ♙xg6.

After 26. ♚f3!, possible is 26...♖a7 27. ♖g4! ♘g5 (there is nothing better; White threatened 28. ♘g6+ hxxg6 29. fxxg6 28. ♙xg5 fxxg5 (28...♙h5 29. ♙xf6 ♚f7 30. ♙g5 ♙xg4 31. hxxg4 and White keeps dangerous threats with two pawns for the exchange) 29. ♚xg5 ♙f7 30. ♚g3 and White has two pawns for the piece and a strong attack.

23. ♙xg7+ ♙xg7
24. g5! ♖f8

It would be a gross blunder to play 24...gxf5 25. gxf5.

25. h4 gxf5

If 25...fxxg5, then 26. ♘xg5 gxf5 27. ♘xh7! and White wins.

26. gxf6 ♙xf6
27. exf5 ♚c8

Black's position is also bad in case of 27...♙e8 28. ♘g5!, when after 28...♙xg5 29. hxxg5 Black's pieces are poorly placed and White's light-squared bishop is particularly strong.

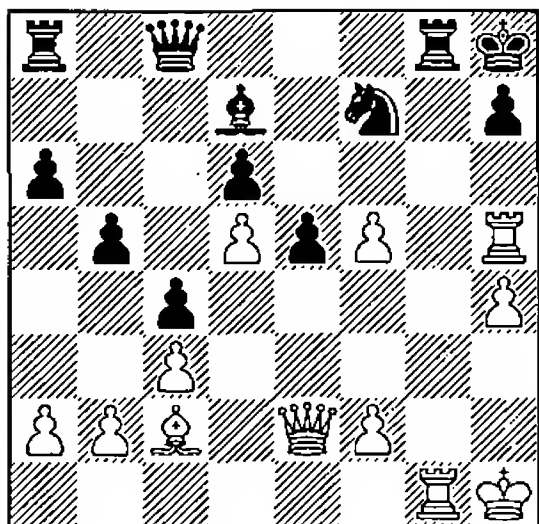
28. ♘g5 ♙xg5

Mate follows after 28...♙xf5 29. ♘xh7 ♙xh7 30. ♙xh7 ♔xh7 31. ♚h5#.

29. ♚xg5 ♘f7
30. ♚h5 ♖g8

This loses by force. Tougher resistance is offered by 30...♘h6 31. ♖xh6 ♙xf5 32. ♖xd6 ♙e4+ 33. ♔h2 ♖f3 34. ♖g3, but White should win eventually.

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31. ♖xh7+! ♔xh7

32. ♕h5+ ♘h6

33. ♖g6 ♕f8

The continuation 33...♖xg6 34. ♕xg6+ ♔h8 35. f6 ♘f5 36. ♕xf5 leads to checkmate.

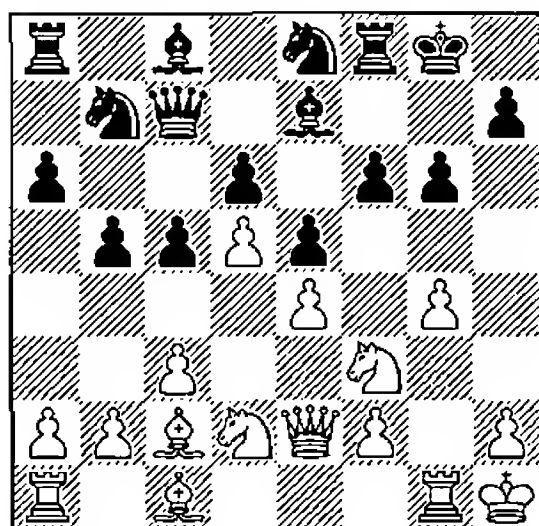
34. ♖xh6+ ♕xh6

35. f6+ e4

36. ♕xe4+ 1-0

No. 153: Learning from Experience

450



Q. How should White continue?

16. a4! ...

In the game **Suetin–Pozdniakov** (Belarus 1953), White has clearly shown his desire to attack on the kingside by the moves ♖g1 and g2-g4. But White de-

cides to take advantage of the poor coordination of Black's pieces on the queenside. Such a decision is typical in Benoni and various Indian structures and shows once again the "cross-pollination" of themes in the openings.

16 ... b4

Capturing on a4 would turn the a6-pawn into a target. However, the game move creates an excellent outpost for White on c4 that can be used as a launching point for the knight on its road to f5.

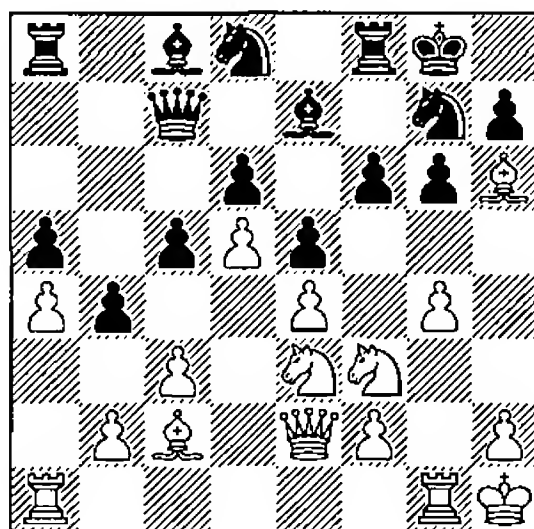
17. ♘c4 a5

18. ♕h6 ♘g7

19. ♘e3 ♘d8

The knight aims to defend the kingside, but its route is too slow: b8-c6-a5-b7-d8-f7! No wonder White gets the time to concentrate his forces on the kingside.

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20. ♘f5! ...

Compare this position to the previous example and we see that Suetin learned from his defeat!

20 ... ♕xf5

20...gxf5 would open files for White's attack: 21. gxf5 ♖f7 22. ♕xg7 ♖xg7 23. ♖xg7+ ♔xg7 24. ♖gl+ ♔f7 25. ♘h4.

21. gxf5 ♘f7

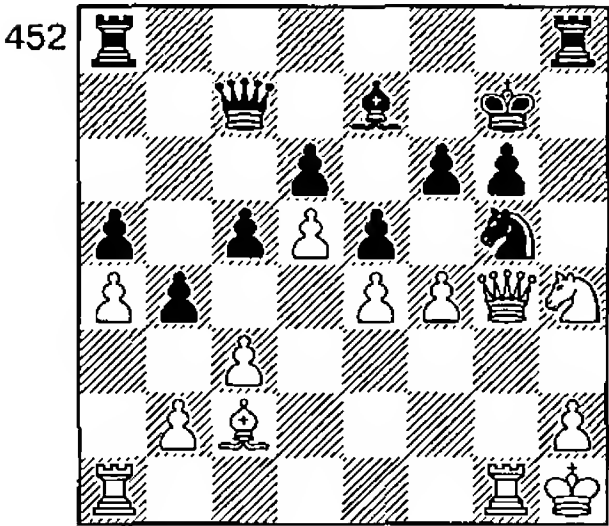
22. ♕xg7 ♔xg7

23. fxg6 hxg6

24. ♖h4 ♗g5
25. f4! ...

Opening more lines fans the flames of the attack.

25 ... ♖h8
26. ♕g4 ...



26 ... ♖xh4?

This leads quickly to disaster. Necessary was 26...exf4, although White keeps strong pressure after 27. e5.

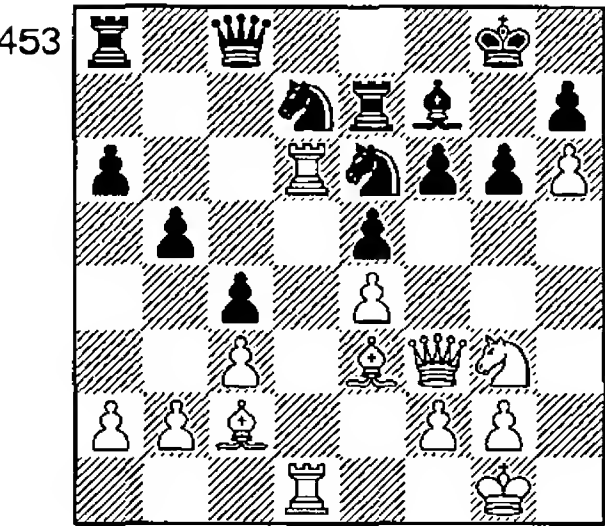
27. ♕xh4 ♗f3
28. ♕h5 ♗xg1
29. ♖xg1 g5
30. fxg5 fxg5
31. ♖f1 ♖f8
31... ♗f6 drops a piece to 32. ♖xf6.
32. ♖xf8 ♗xf8
33. ♕h8+ ♗f7
34. ♗d1 ...

Very few pieces remain on the board, but this is no solace to Black. White's advantage has crystallized, as the light-squared bishop is unopposed. This is yet another example of an attack with opposite-colored bishops.

34 ... ♗f8
35. ♗h5+ ♗e7
36. ♕g8 1-0

Black resigned, as either checkmate or loss of material is inevitable.

No. 154:
An Offer that Cannot Be Refused



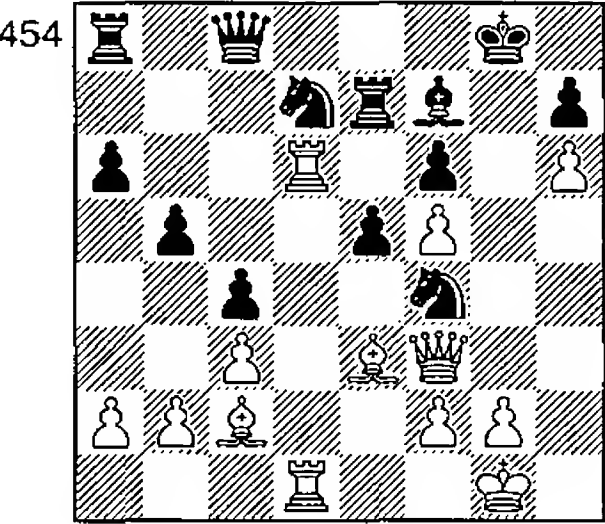
Q. What is the best way for White to develop an attack?

31. ♗f5! ...

This sacrifice, from the game **Bronstein—N.Kopylov** (USSR Championship 1949), is typical for such positions in the Spanish Game; it must be accepted because the attacked rook is needed to defend the knight on d7. As compensation the g-file and the h1-a8 diagonal are opened, and the white queen becomes fully active.

31... gxf5
32. exf5 ♗f4

The only move. After 32... ♗g5, the finish would be 33. ♗xg5 fxg5 34. f6; if 32... ♗ef8, then 33. ♕g4+ ♗g6 34. fxg6 wins.



33. ♖xd7 ...

There can be many ways to win in a good position. Here, White also has the variation 33. ♖g4+ ♔f8 34. ♖g7+ ♔e8 35. ♕e4 with the threats ♕xa8 and ♕c6.

33 ... ♖xd7

34. ♖xd7 ♖xd7

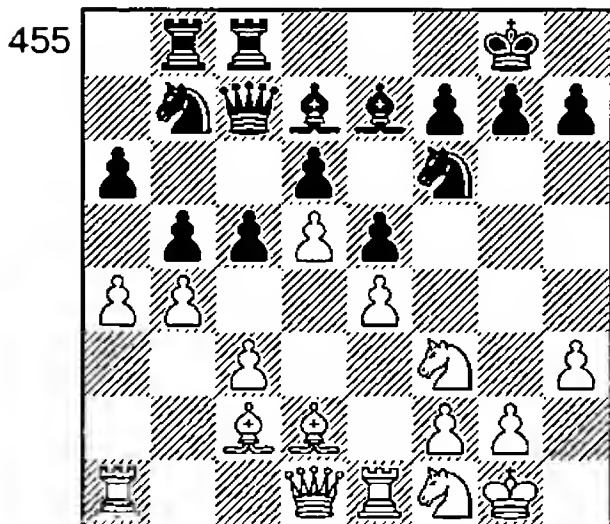
35. ♖xa8+ ...

The rest is easy.

35... ♕e8 36. ♕xf4 exf4 37. ♖xa6 ♖e7 38. ♖e6+ ♔f8 39. ♖xe7+ ♔xe7 40. ♕e4 ♔d6 41. g4 fxg3 42. fxg3 ♔e5 43. ♕c2 ♕d7 1-0

At this point the game was adjourned, but Black resigned before resuming. The winning plan consists of putting the king on e3, the pawn on g4, and creating a passed pawn on the queenside. At the same time, White threatens the break g4-g5 if the black king leaves the e5 square.

No. 155: Shut Down Your Opponent's Play Before Starting Your Own



Q. Suggest a plan for White.

18. ♕d3! ...

In the game **Zuckerman–Kostro** (Polanica Zdroj 1972), White's thoughts are

of playing on the kingside, as is typical in the Ruy López. But first he must eliminate Black's possibilities on the queenside. Hence White compels his opponent to play ...c5-c4 by pressuring the b5-pawn; White will then lock up the queenside by playing a4-a5. Only then will a direct attack on the enemy king become possible.

18 ... ♖a8

19. ♖e2 c4

20. ♕c2 ...

The first stage of the plan is executed.

20 ... ♖e8

Black should probably play 20...a5 21. axb5 ♕xb5 22. ♖e3 g6 23. ♖eb1, when White has only a small initiative. But now White can close the queenside, which allows him to increase the pressure on the kingside considerably. There is a reason the Spanish Game is nicknamed the "Spanish Torture."

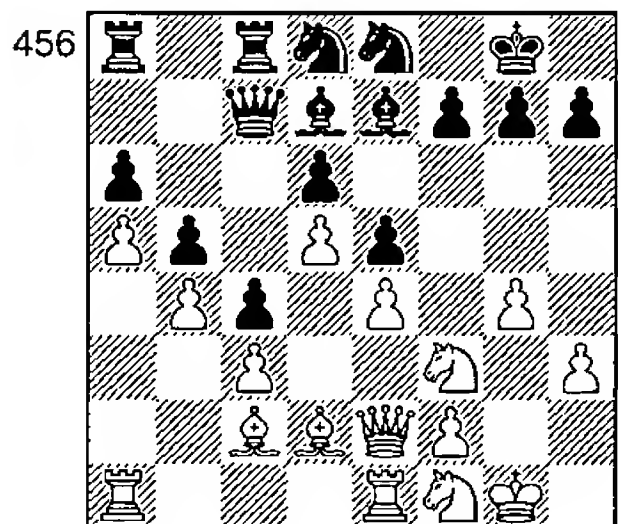
21. a5! ...

The second stage of the plan is complete.

21 ... ♖d8

Black intends to construct a defensive fortress with ...f7-f6, ...g7-g6, ...♖b7-d8-f7, ...♗e8-g7, ...♖c8-g8, ...♖a8-f8.

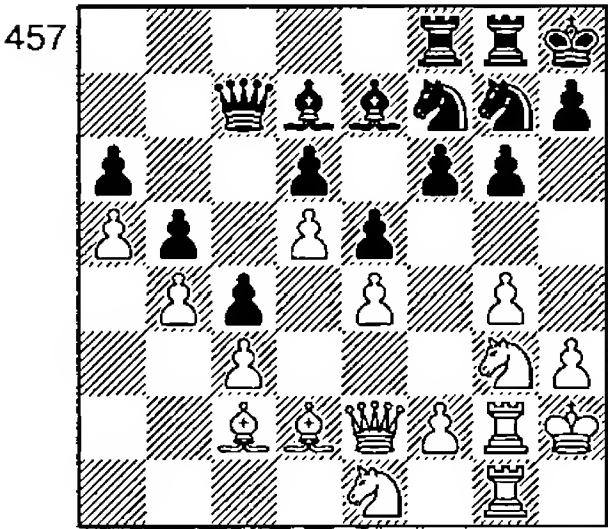
22. g4 ...



22 ... g6

Black can go for broke with the impulsive 22...h5. However, the cool reply 23. ♘e3 keeps the initiative for the first player, when it will be White and not Black who gets to use the open h-file. After all, White's space advantage confers greater piece mobility.

23. ♘g3 f6
24. ♖h2 ♗f7
25. ♜g1 ♘g7
26. ♜g2 ♙h8
27. ♜ag1 ♜g8
28. ♘e1 ♞af8



The pressure can only be increased by the advance f2-f4. A similar method was seen in the game Bogolyubov–Rubinstein (Baden-Baden 1925): yet another reason to study the classics.

29. f4 exf4

As Bobby Fischer said, “you have to give squares to get squares.” Black gets e5 for the knight while handing d4 to White. However, the black knight on e5 can do nothing by itself.

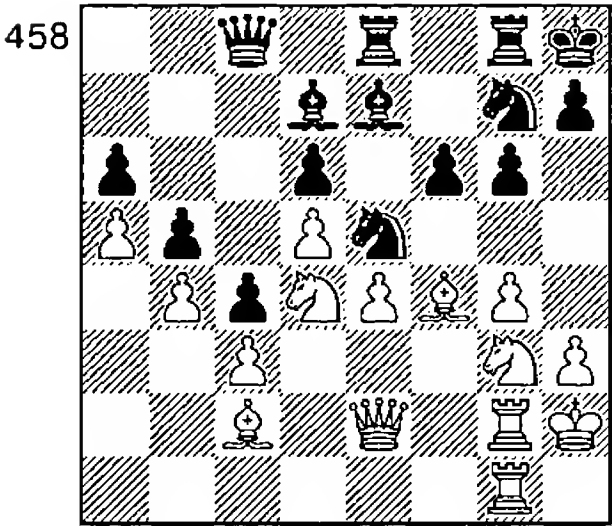
30. ♙xf4 ♞e5
31. ♞f3 ♚c8

Black has a sorry position after 31... ♞xf3+ 32. ♚xf3.

32. ♘d4 ...

White's piece arrangement is almost ideal and Black's king will not find sanctuary anywhere. The game is essentially decided, but accuracy is required to the end.

32 ... ♚e8



33. ♘gf5! ...

White's concentration of forces on the kingside creates strong threats to the black king. Bogolyubov played this same maneuver and the game ended in a draw after a hard fight. This goes to show that when two different people do the same thing, it is not the same!

33 ... gxf5

Better resistance was offered by 33... ♞f7 34. ♘h6 ♞xh6 35. ♙xh6 g5 36. ♙b1 ♙f8 37. ♚c2 ♜e5 38. ♞f3 ♜e7 39. e5, though this is just one of many possible variations.

34. gxf5 ♞f7

Black defends h6 from the white bishop. The continuation 34...♞ef8 35. ♙h6 ♞e8 36. ♙xf8 ♜xf8 37. ♚h5 is unsatisfactory, as the threat of ♚h6 and ♜g7 is crushing.

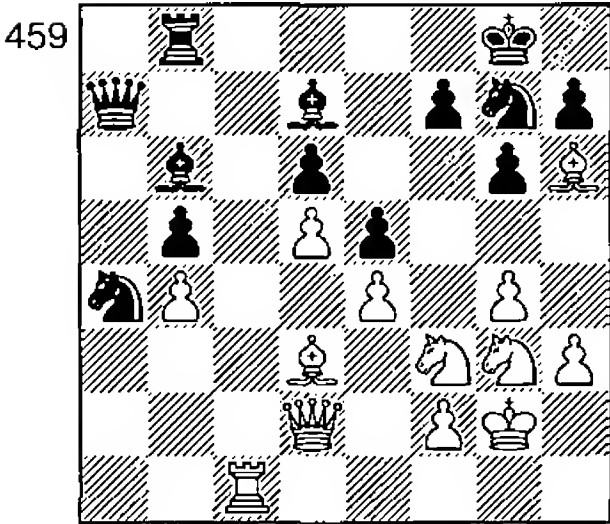
35. ♜g4 ♞e5
36. ♜h4! ...

In addition to g7, h7 is also weak, and White aims his battery of major pieces on it.

36 ... ♖ef8
 37. ♖g6! ♜f7
 38. ♖xh7+! ♜xh7
 39. ♔g4 1-0

Mate is inevitable.

No. 156: A Stock Sacrifice



Q. Suggest a move for White.

31. ♜f5! ...

In the game **Aronin—Tolush** (Moscow 1952), White recognizes the prescribed middlegame motif.

31 ... ♜xf5

31...gxf5 loses to 32. ♔g5; no better is 31...♜e8 32. ♜e7+ ♔h8 33. ♜g5. As a result of the game move, White's light-squared bishop is activated and the black king comes under strong attack.

32. exf5 ♜d8

The need for Black to defend against attack by the dark-squared bishop shows that the initiative is firmly in White's hands. 32...♜e8 is met by 33. ♜g5 ♜d8 34. ♜xd8 ♖xd8 35. ♔h6.

33. ♜g5 f6

This is forced. After 33...♔g7, White wins by 34. ♜xd8 ♖xd8 35. f6+.

34. ♜e3 ♜b6

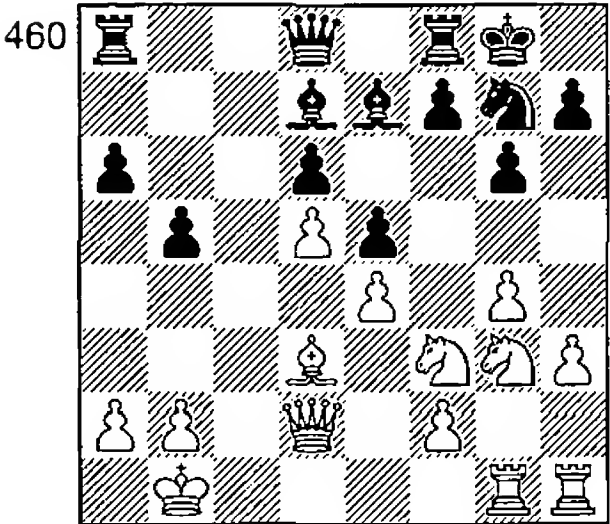
35. fxg6 hxg6

36. ♜xg6 ...

White is winning. Black's kingside is shattered and further resistance is in vain.

36...♔g7 37. ♜e4 ♜h8 38. ♔g3 ♔b8 39. ♜h4 ♜xe3 40. ♔xe3 ♜b6 41. ♔f3 ♜c4 42. ♜f5 ♔b7 43. ♖a1 ♜xf5 44. ♔xf5 ♔f7 45. ♔e6 ♔xe6 46. dxe6 ♖e8 47. ♜f5 ♔g8 48. e7 d5 49. ♖a7 d4 50. ♖d7 ♔f7 51. ♔f3 ♔e6 52. ♖a7 ♔f7 53. ♔e4 ♖b8 54. h4 ♜d2+ 55. ♔d3 1-0

No. 157: The Wrong Way



Q. Should White play a) 20. ♔h6, or b) 20. ♜f5?

This position, from the game **L.Semenova—Levitina** (Women's World Championship [3] 1984), is typical of some closed variations of the Spanish Game, except that the white king is on the queenside, which favors White, and White's dark-squared bishop is absent, which favors Black.

20. ♔h6?! ...

White aspires to create direct threats, but there is no need to hurry. As the reader may have guessed, 20. ♜f5! conforms to the spirit of the position. In case of 20...gxf5? 21. gxf5, Black's position would be defenseless against the threat of ♔h6.

For example, 21...f6 22. ♖h6 ♜f7 23. ♜g4 ♙f8 24. ♜hgl ♙h8 25. ♙h4; or 21...♙h8 22. ♖h6 ♜g8 23. h4 ♙e8 24. ♜xg8+ ♙xg8 25. ♜gl+ ♙h8 26. ♙g5. Therefore, the knight is immune from capture and White could continue her preparation for a pawn storm.

20 ... f6
21. h4 ♜f7!

This is a very important link in the defense. If 21...♙xg4, the attack flares up by 22. ♙f5!.

22. ♙f1 ♜f8!
23. ♖d2 ...

Because of the positional threat 23...♙e6, White must lose time with this retreat.

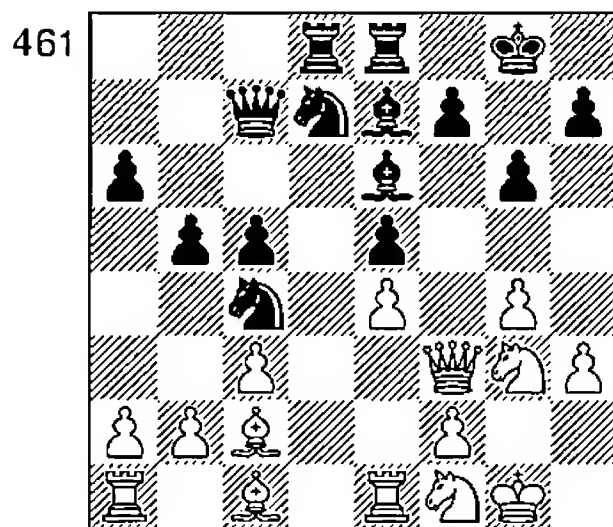
23 ... ♙h8
24. ♙e3 ♙d8
25. ♜c1 ...

Now that the offensive on the kingside has fallen short, White loses the strategic thread and marks time, gradually yielding the initiative. Correct was 25. h5! g5 (if 25...gxh5, then 26. ♙h4!) 26. h6 ♙e8 and only then 27. ♜c1 with play on the queenside. White could later increase the pressure by playing ♙e3-f5 at once, or by preparing to transfer the knight from f3 to g3 followed by ♙gf5 with a positional advantage. The rest of the game is interesting, but not relevant to our purposes.

The game continued 25...♙b6 26. ♜hg1 ♖d8 27. ♖e2 ♜c8 28. ♜xc8 ♙xc8 29. ♙c2 ♙c5 30. ♙d2? f5! 31. gxf5 gxf5 32. h5? ♖h4 33. ♙f3 ♖xf2 34. ♖xf2 ♙xf2 35. ♙g5 ♜f8 36. ♜f1 ♙h4 37. ♙f3 ♙e7 38. h6 ♙h5 39. exf5 ♙xf5 40. ♙xf5 ♜xf5 41. ♙d2 ♜xf1+ 42. ♙xf1 ♙g5 43. ♙b4 ♙f6 44. ♙c2! ♙xh6? 45. ♙xa6 ♙xd5 46. ♙d3 ♖g7 47. ♙e4 ♙f6+ 48. ♖f5 ♙e8? 49. ♙e6! ♙f4 50. ♙b4! e4 51. ♙d5 ♙e5 52. b3 ♖g6 53. ♙d2? ♙f6! 54.

a4 bxa4 55. bxa4 ♙xd5 56. ♖xd5 e3 57. ♙f3 ♙c3 58. ♖xd6 ♖f5 59. ♙g1 ♖e4 60. ♙e2 ♙b4+ 61. ♖e6 h5 62. ♖f6 ♖f3 63. ♙d4+ ♖g4 0-1

No. 158: Sometimes It Doesn't Work



Q. In the diagram position, White played 20. ♙f5. Does this move a) strengthen the attack; or b) lead to defeat?

20. ♙f5 ...

This move might bring success in an over-the-board game with limited time for reflection; however, it was played in the correspondence game **Simagin—Sadomsky** (USSR ch-06, 1963). In this kind of tournament, psychological sacrifices are unacceptable, as the opponent can put every move under the microscope. Instead, White should focus on capturing the d5 square.

20... gxf5!

Black is not winning a piece because the bishop is trapped, but he now begins to maneuver to capture the open g-file.

21. gxf5 ...

It is necessary to take with precisely this pawn, because after 21. exf5 e4! White remains a piece down.

21 ... ♔h8

22. a4 ...

White fights for the a-file in order to penetrate with the major pieces.

22 ... ♖g8+

23. ♘g3 ♙h4

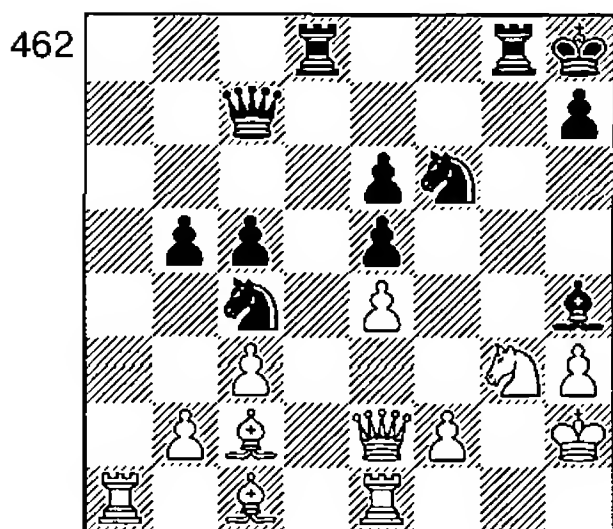
24. axb5 axb5

25. ♔h2 ♘f6

26. fxe6 fxe6

Notice that the “weak” e6-pawn guards both d5 and f5 and makes it difficult for White to play on the kingside.

27. ♖e2 ...



White defends against 27...♖df8. It would seem that White's position is viable and that Black has a long way to go to win. Therefore, the rest of the game is very instructive.

27 ... ♖g6!

The g-file becomes the main avenue of operations for Black's major pieces.

28. ♖g1 ♖dg8

29. b3 ♘d6

30. ♙e3 ♖g7

31. ♖f3 ♘f7!

A surprising move; Black is not afraid of the white rook's reaching the seventh rank.

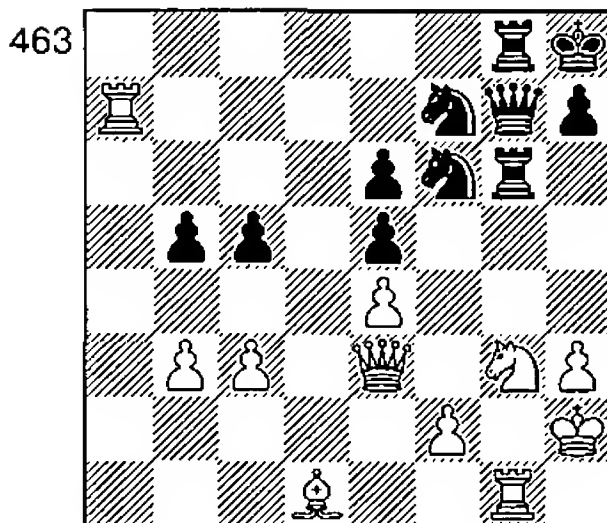
32. ♖a7 ...

Neither 32. ♘e2 ♙g5 nor 32. ♙xc5 ♘g5 are any better for White.

32 ... ♙g5!

33. ♙d1 ♙xe3

34. ♖xe3 ...



34 ... h5!

Now that Black dominates the g-file, he compels White to further weaken his position by advancing the h-pawn.

35. h4 ♖g4

36. ♔g2 ♖xh4

37. ♔f1 c4

38. bxc4 bxc4

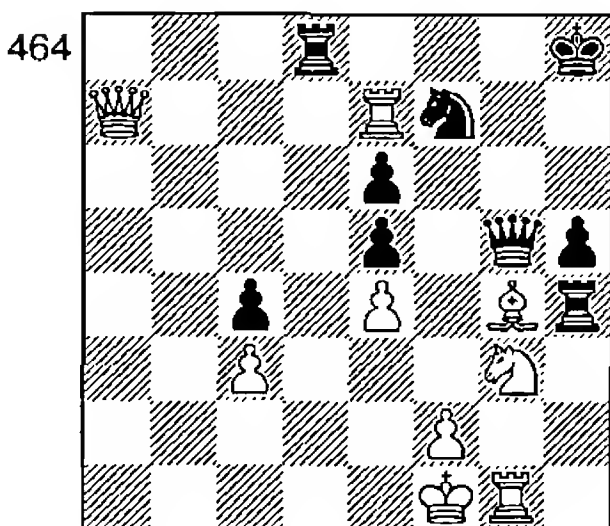
39. ♖e7 ♖d8

Now Black decisively switches to the d-file, when it becomes essential to defend against 40...♖d3.

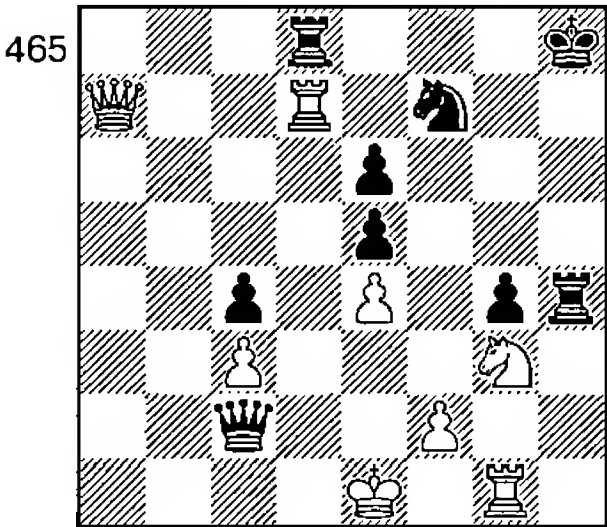
40. ♙e2 ♘g4

41. ♖a7 ♖g5

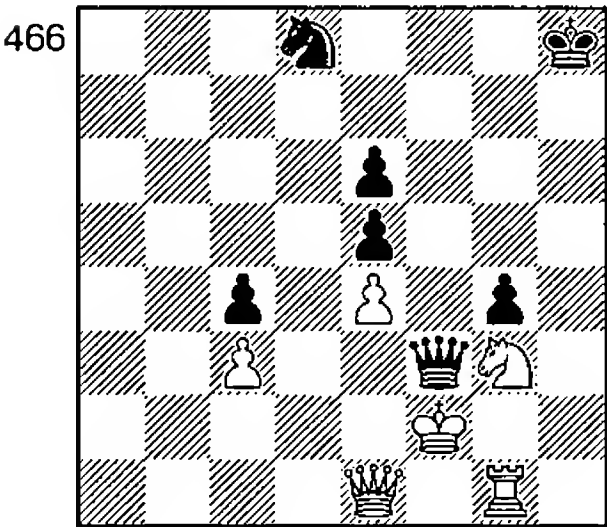
42. ♙xc4 ...



42. ♖xf7 is bad in view of 42... ♖c1+
43. ♗g2 ♖h2+ 44. ♗f3 ♖xc3+.
42 ... hxc4!
43. ♖d7 ...
After 43. ♖xf7 ♖c1+ 44. ♗g2 ♖h2+
45. ♗xh2 ♖h6+, it is mate in two.
43 ... ♖c1+
44. ♗e2 ♖c2+!
Black avoids 44... ♖xg1 45. ♖xd8+
♘xd8 46. ♖e7 with a draw for White.
45. ♗e1 ...



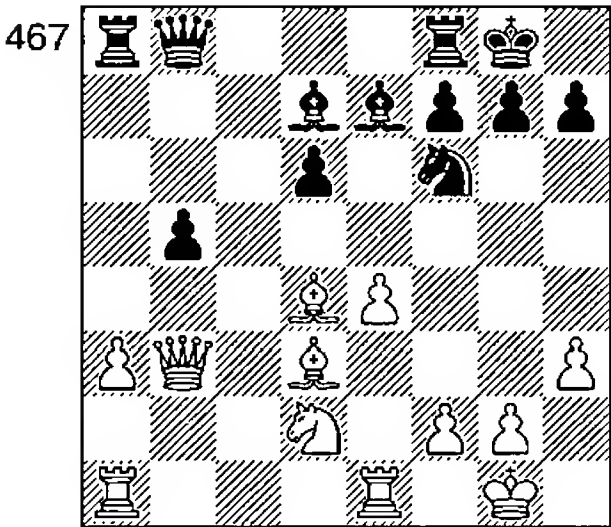
Now White's position is hopeless, as Black's material advantage increases. White saw that 45. ♗f1 loses to 45... ♖h2 46. ♖xd8+ ♘xd8 47. ♖e3 ♖d1+ 48. ♖e1 ♖xf2+ 49. ♗xf2 ♖f3#. This position deserves its own diagram.



The balance of the moves requires no comment.

45... ♖xc3+ 46. ♗e2 ♖f3+ 47. ♗e1
♖xd7 48. ♖xd7 ♖h2 49. ♖f1 ♖c3+ 50.
♖d2 ♖d4 51. ♗e2 ♗g7 52. ♖e3 ♖b2+
53. ♖d2 ♖b3 54. ♖e3 c3 55. ♖c1
♖b2+ 56. ♗e1 ♖xf2 57. ♖xc3 ♗g5 58.
♖xb2 ♖xb2 59. ♗f1 ♗f3 60. ♖c8 ♗g6
61. ♖g8+ ♗h6 62. ♖e8 ♗g5 63. ♖f8
♖a2 64. ♗e2 ♗d2+ 65. ♗g1 ♗xe4 66.
♖g8+ ♗h6 67. ♗f1 ♗f6 68. ♖f8 ♗g5
69. ♖f7 ♗h5 0-1

No. 159: Piece Coordination



Q. In the diagram position, is 23... ♗e8 a) a good move leading to equal play for Black; or b) a mistake that gives White the edge?

23 ... ♗e8?

In the game **Boleslavsky–Goldenov** (USSR Championship 1947), Black's move seems to be the decisive error. Black likely anticipated only that White would try to make use of his strong e4-pawn and the backward d6-pawn by using d5 as an outpost. In this case, Black could create a fortress after 24. ♗f1 ♗c7 25. ♗e3 ♗e6 26. ♗b2 ♗c5 27. ♖c2 ♗xd3 28. ♖xd3 ♗f6. However, Boleslavsky opted for an exchange of

pawns in the center instead, opening further lines for the white pieces and highlighting the uncoordinated state of Black's forces.

Let's talk a little about the interaction of the pieces. The goal in chess is, of course, to checkmate the opponent's king; however, no one piece can do this by itself. Therefore, the pieces must coordinate their actions to attain a specific goal. It is extremely important for chessplayers of all levels to understand how such interaction arises and how to foster it. It is important to remember that *the value of the pieces depends on their potential activity in a given position and not on their point sum*. In the middlegame the primary goal of a chessplayer is to utilize the features of the position so as to best take advantage of the interaction of his pieces.

24. e5! dxe5

25. ♖xe5 ♗d6

26. ♟f3 ...

If White played 26. ♖b2 immediately, then Black would have time to eliminate his weak pawn by 26...b4.

26 ... ♖a4

Black's position is very difficult. For instance, the exchange on e5 leads to the loss of the b-pawn, and White has a big advantage in case of 26...♗c6 27. ♗xh7+ ♔xh7 28. ♖c2+ or 26...♖b7 27. ♗e4 ♗c6 28. ♗xc6 ♖xc6 29. ♟d4!. Thus the game move is the only one.

27. ♗b2 ♖f4

27...b4 drops a pawn to 28. ♟e5.

28. ♟e5 ♖a7

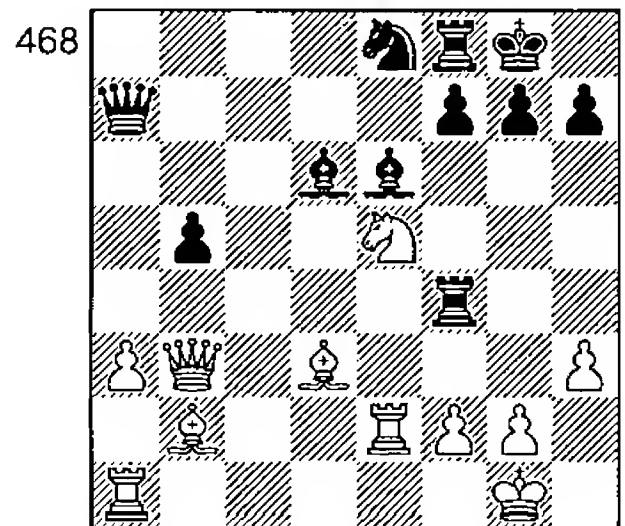
29. ♖e2 ...

White defends f2, though he could also eliminate an important defender by 29. ♟xd7, because, as the following variation shows, Black wouldn't have

time to exploit the temporary vulnerability of the f-pawn: 29...♖xf2 30. ♗xh7+! ♔h8 (or 30...♔xh7 31. ♟xf8+) 31. ♖e3 ♖xe3 32. ♖xe3 ♖xb2 33. ♔h1!.

Chess is a very concrete game: sometimes one tiny pawn move can be ruinous. Therefore we need to train in the calculation of variations. There is no way around it.

29 ... ♗e6



This is Black's last attempt to complicate matters, as 30. ♖xb5 ♟c7 looks pretty messy. Therefore, White postpones the capture for one move.

30. ♖c2! ♟f6

31. ♗xb5 ♖c8

32. ♖d2 ...

This is the way to take advantage of Black's loose pieces.

32 ... ♗xe5

Black suffers material disaster after 32...♟d5 33. ♗c6 ♖a6 34. ♗xd5 ♗xd5 35. ♖ae1. But now White's forces, including his two powerful bishops, shatter Black's position. White is much better.

33. ♖xe5! ♖e4

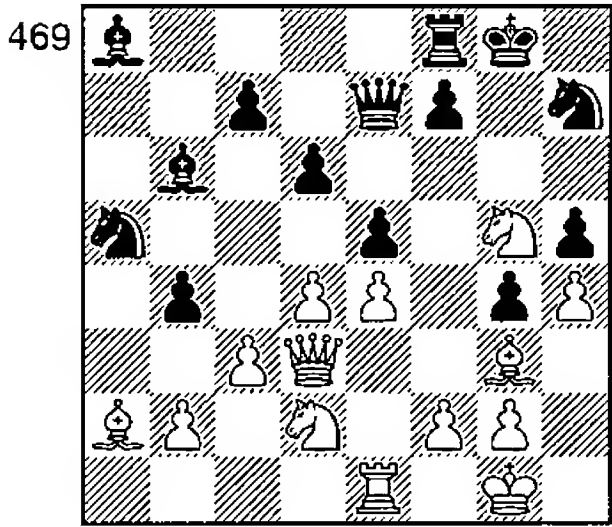
White's advantage is also clear after 33...♖f5 34. ♖xf5 ♗xf5 35. ♖f4 (but not 35. ♖g5? ♖xf2+).

34. ♖g5 ♖e7

35. ♖xg7+! 1-0

Black resigned, as his queen is the price for avoiding mate.

No. 160: Lack of Coordination, the Seed of Defeat



Q. How good is Black's piece coordination?

In the game **Prokofiev–Zaverniaev** (USSR Corr. Championship 1957), Black's pieces are scattered all over the board and it is difficult to speak of coordination. To put it simply, there isn't any. Moreover, the black king is in a sorry state as it is practically deprived of pawn cover. It is no wonder that White can take advantage of all these defects.

21. ♖xf7! ♖xf7
22. cxb4 ♖c6

On 22...♖b7, White wins by 23. ♖a6 ♖d8 24. ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 25. ♖a1.

23. ♖a6 ♖d8
24. ♖a1 ♖a7

The only move; White threatened 25. ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 26. ♖xa8.

25. ♖xf7+ ♖xf7
26. dxe5 d5!

This is the right decision: the black pieces on the queenside need to be untangled. After 26...dxe5 27. ♖c4, Black is helpless.

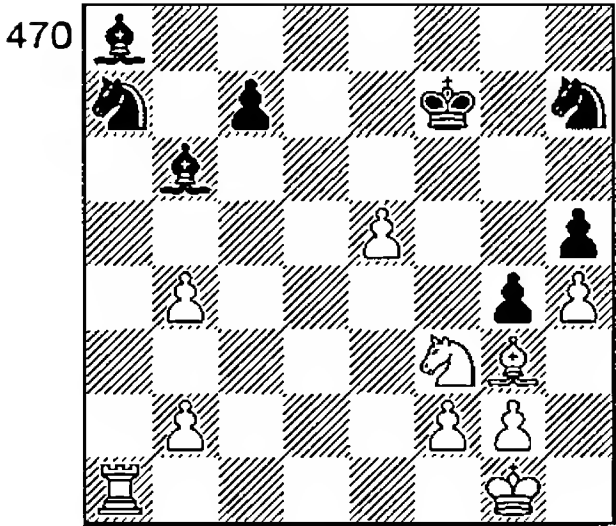
27. ♖d3 ♖e8
28. exd5 ♖xd5
29. ♖g6+ ♖f8
30. ♖f3! ...

Excellent; now after 30...gxf3 31. e6!, Black's king cannot be saved.

30 ... ♖f7
31. ♖xf7+ ...

White has accurately calculated the resulting ending. The ridiculous placement of the black pieces is reminiscent of a chess composition.

31 ... ♖xf7

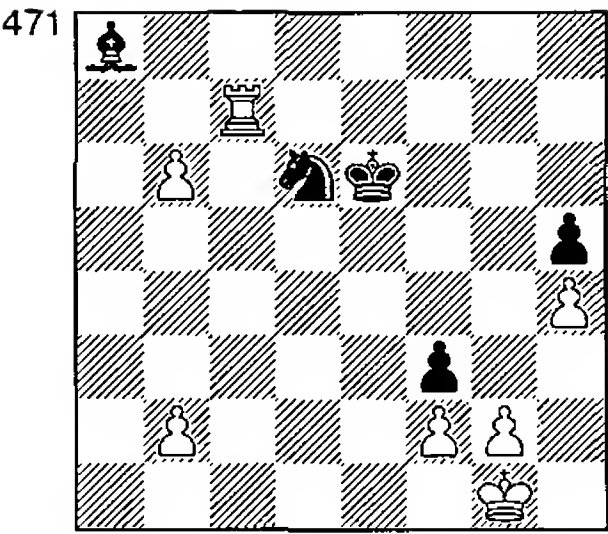


32. e6+! ♖xe6
33. ♖xc7 ♖xc7
34. ♖xa7 gxf3
35. ♖xc7 ♖f6
36. b5 ♖e4
37. b6 ♖d6

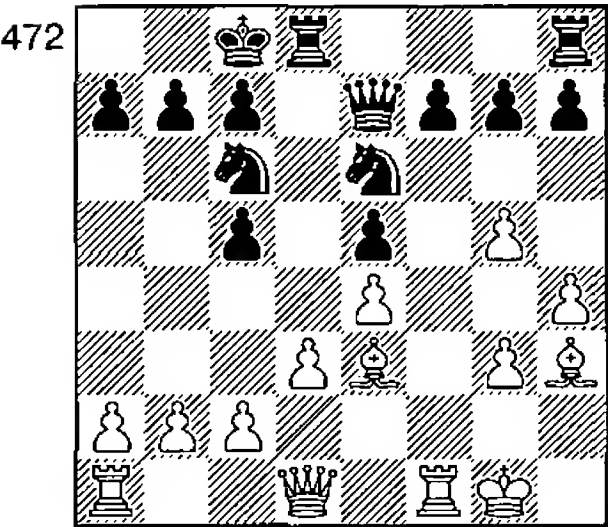
(See Diagram 471)

38. g4! bxc4
39. h5 1-0

Black resigned, as he cannot cope with Prokofiev's study-like pawn advances.



**No. 161:
The Obligation to Attack**



Q. Suggest a plan for White. Support it with variations.

In the game **Spassky–Gligorić** (Baden-Baden 1980), White has more space, the bishop pair in an open position, and control of the half-open f-file. Thus, White is obliged to attack.

15. ♖h5! ...

Spassky introduces a deep and complicated plan. First, White attacks f7 so as to bind the black pieces to the kingside. Second, he seeks to open files on the queenside in order to attack Black's king.

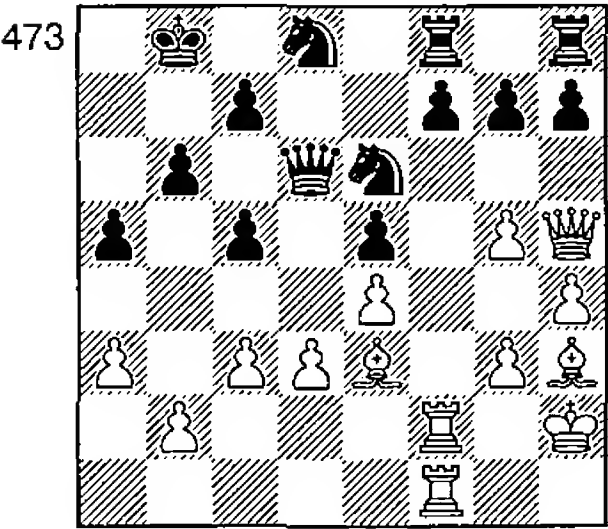
15 ... ♜d8

Black is compelled to defend, which indicates that White has the initiative. Alternatives were worse: 15...g6 weakens f6, and 15...♞d7 allows 16. ♙xf7 ♙xf7 17. ♜xf7 ♜xf7 18. ♙xe6+ ♞d7 19. ♙xc5. Spassky carried out a similar combination against Vlastimil Hort at Bugojno in 1978.

16. ♜f2 ♙b8
17. ♜af1 ♞cd8
18. ♙h2 b6
19. a3 ...

White starts the second phase of his plan.

19 ... a5
20. c3 ♙d6



21. ♙d1 ...

The queen has finished her task and is shifted over to the queenside where everything is ready for the decisive pawn storm.

21 ... ♜e8
22. b4 ...

White must open lines in order to bring his pieces into the attack. Unfortunately for Black, he is compelled to take on b4.

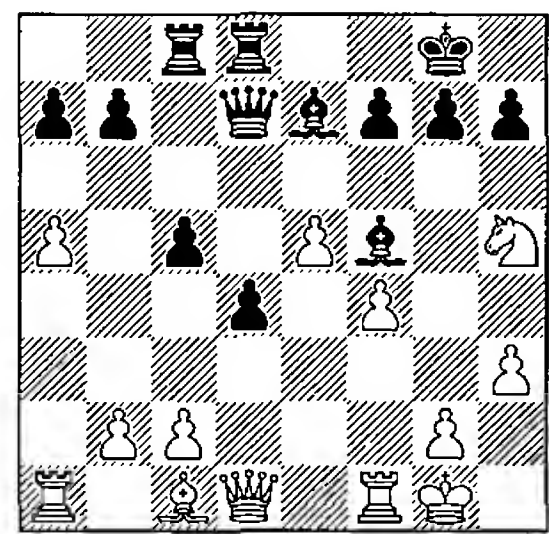
22 ... axb4
23. acb4 cxb4
24. cxb4 ♞d4

25. ♖a2 ...

Now White moves his heavy artillery to the a-file. Given Black's time trouble he can hardly cope with the defense of this position, even if he had an additional hour for reflection. White's pieces swarm onto the a- and c-files, bringing about a quick end that requires no further comment.

25 ... ♙c6
26. ♕xd4 exd4
27. ♖a1 ♜e7
28. ♖a7 ♖c2+
29. ♔h1 ♖xd3
30. ♖c1 ♞c6
31. ♖a8+ ♔b7
32. ♖xh8 ♜b8
33. ♕c8#

No. 162:
Another Unfounded Attack



Q. Evaluate the consequences of 20. g4.

20. g4? ...

In the game **Rubtsova–Bykova** (Kiev 1966), White's knight is aggressively placed on the kingside, but no other pieces participate in the attack. Meanwhile, Black has a strong center and fine piece development. White's thoughts of mounting an attack under these conditions are pure fantasy.

20 ... ♕e4
21. ♖e2 ♕c6

Black now controls the h1-a8 diagonal, and the dark-squared bishop will also soon take up a commanding position. We have already seen many examples of the power of the two bishops; I would like to share one more beautiful game. By the way, Bykova was the second postwar women's world champion.

22. ♖d1 ♖d5

White cannot avoid losing material if Black invades on the diagonal.

23. ♜g3 c4
24. c3 ...

White goes badly astray. However, it would have been impossible to withstand the assault for very long.

24 ... d3!
25. ♖f2 ...

25. ♖d2 ♕c5+ 26. ♔h2 ♕e3! is no help.

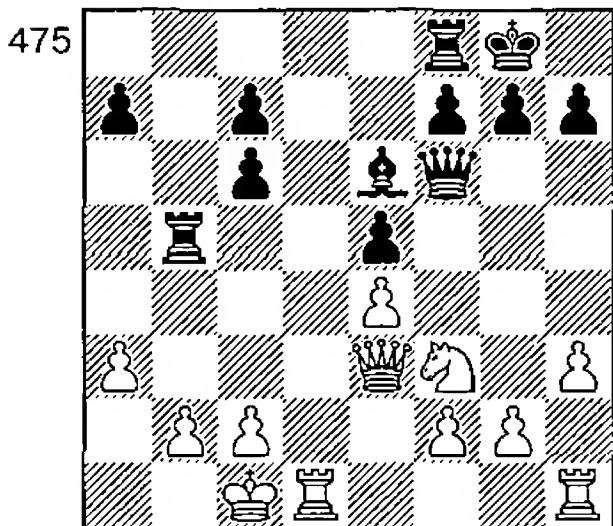
25 ... ♕c5
26. ♕e3 ♕xe3
27. ♖xe3 ♖g2#

The desire to attack at all costs without regard to the position often leads to tragic results.

Chapter V

Defense

No. 163: Trading Off the Attacker



Q. In the diagram position, how should White react to Black's threatened attack on the queenside?

17. ♔g5! ...

In the game **Botvinnik—Smyslov** (Sverdlovsk 1943), White makes an offer to trade queens that cannot be refused. In this way White stamps out Black's initiative. Once the queens are removed, the remaining forces are insufficient to create any serious threats.

This follows the rule of chess theory that the exchange of an inactive piece for an active, attacking piece favors the

defender. If it is possible to remove several fighting units from the battlefield at once, the attack can be beaten back.

Another consideration is that the transition into the ending favors White. Black's isolated a7-pawn demands constant care, and the c6- and c7-pawns are doubled. Now that the middlegame attack has dissipated, the negative aspects of the weak queenside pawns becomes a factor, as Black cannot easily create a passed pawn. Thus, Black's queenside pawns form two isolated 'islands' that demand constant protection. This is a significant precondition for White's victory.

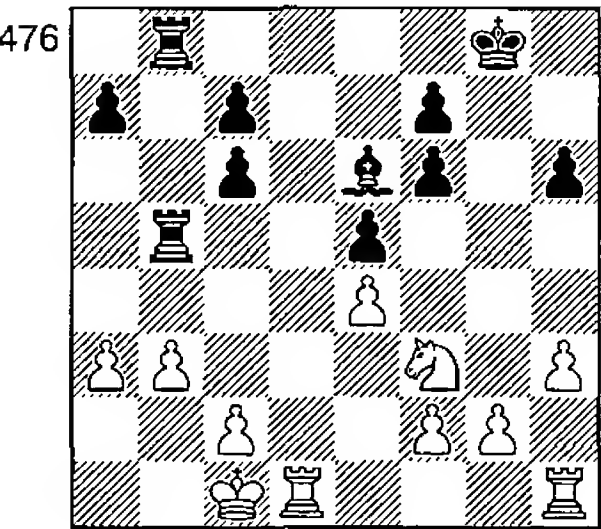
I recommend that the reader try a fairly useful exercise in which one side plays with four pawns, two of which are doubled, against an opponent with three pawns on the same flank, and then try to create a passed pawn. Usually this can only be achieved if the opponent misplays the position. Next, play with three pawns against three, of which two are doubled. This will further convince you of the hopelessness of creating a passed pawn if both sides play correctly.

It is also necessary to consider the psychological factors involved. Smyslov was very young at the time and was probably unprepared for such a sharp transformation. He believed he was attacking the king, but instead he has to play a difficult endgame. That alone could cause errors.

17... ♖fb8
18. b3 ...

Alas, nothing comes of Black's attack. In case of 18... ♗xb3, White will first exchange queens and only then take the bishop.

18... h6
19. ♔xf6 gxf6



20. ♖d3 ...

Here is the first proof that Botvinnik made the right decision on move 17. The threat of transferring the white rook to c3 is unpleasant.

20... f5

Black's wish to eliminate a set of doubled pawns is natural, and this also increases the bishop's scope. However, the bishop's subsequent use as defender of the c6-pawn makes it passive. Thus, Botvinnik's suggestion of 20... ♗f8 21. ♖c3 ♗5b6 22. ♖d1 ♗e7 was preferable.

21. exf5 ♗xf5

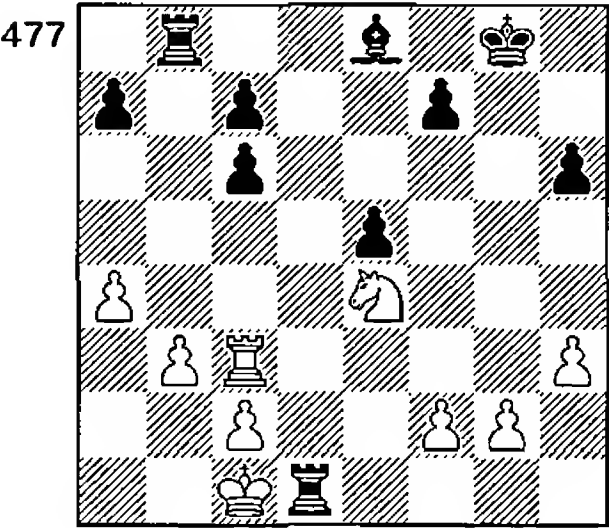
22. ♖c3 ...

White uses the initiative to create constant threats.

22... ♗d7
23. ♖d1 ♗e8
24. a4 ♖a5
25. ♗d2 ♖d5

A move earlier, playing the rook to d5 would have lost the c7-pawn. Now it is very strong.

26. ♗e4 ♖xd1+?



There was absolutely no need for this exchange. Smyslov facilitates Botvinnik's task: now the white king achieves its aim of reaching the center.

Black would have done well to keep this rook on d5 (or d6) for as long as possible, and if White chose to exchange, it would improve Black's pawn structure. However, even this idea does not change the evaluation of the position. It was difficult for Black all the same.

27. ♗xd1 ♖d8+
28. ♗e2 ♗g7
29. ♖g3+ ♗f8
30. ♗f6 ♗e7
31. ♗g8+ ...

After this move, White's advantage is both positional and material.

31... ♗e6 32. ♗xh6 f5 33. ♖g7 ♗d7

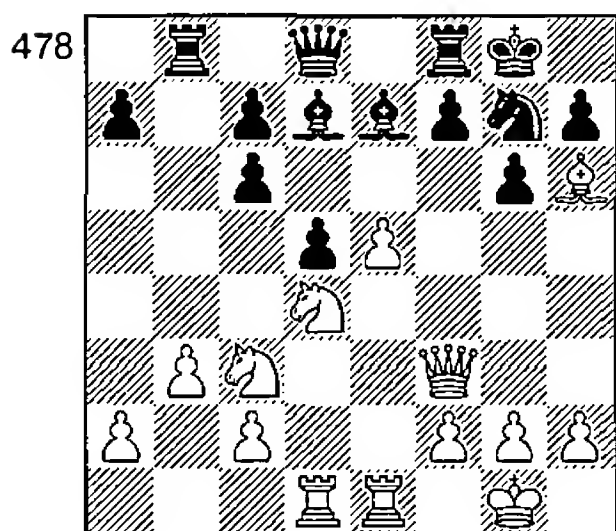
34. ♖g6+ ♔d5 35. g4 f4 36. ♖g8 ♖xg8
37. ♜xg8

Black could attempt to pursue the aggressive horse, but that would still result in a winning ending for White: 37... ♜e6 38. f3 ♜f7 39. ♜h6+ ♜g6 40. ♜f5 ♜xf5 41. gxf5 ♜xf5 42. ♜d3.

37... ♜d4 38. ♜f6 ♜c8 39. f3 ♜c3
40. h4

Now the pawn cannot be stopped. Therefore, Black resigned. 1-0

No. 164: Self-Undermining



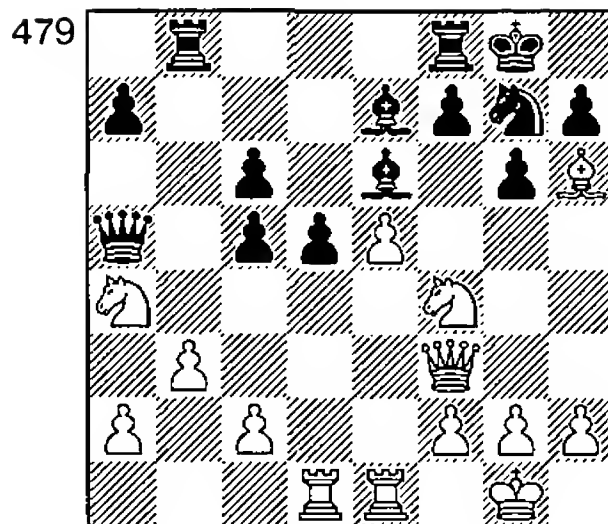
Q. Is 15...c5 a) a mistake leading to defeat; or b) a good move leading to a good position?

15... c5

This move is a positional error that destroys the foundation of Black's position in the center and leads to severe consequences. Preferable was 15... ♜b4! with a decent game.

16. ♜de2 c6
17. ♜f4 ♜e6
18. ♜a4 ♜a5

This is the position that Black was aiming for in the game Geller–Shamkovich (USSR Team Championship 1968). Now Black threatens ...c5-c4.



19. c4! ...

Black underestimated this strong blow. His apparently solid position is suddenly demolished.

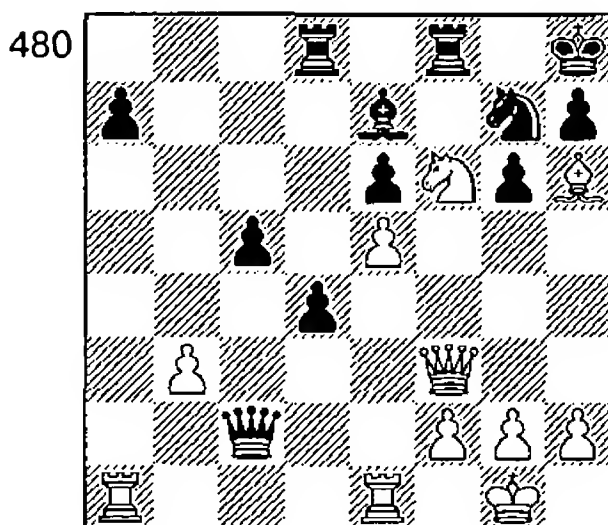
19... ♜bd8

After 19...dxc4 20. ♜xg7 ♜xg7 21. ♜xe6+ fxe6 22. ♜xc6 White would end up a pawn ahead, with a positional advantage to boot. But Black's actual move is no better.

20. cxd5 cxd5
21. ♜c3 d4
22. ♜e4 ♜xa2

Black's position is bad and if he is to suffer, then he might as well have a pawn for it.

23. ♜f6+ ♜h8
24. ♜xe6 fxe6
25. ♜a1 ♜c2

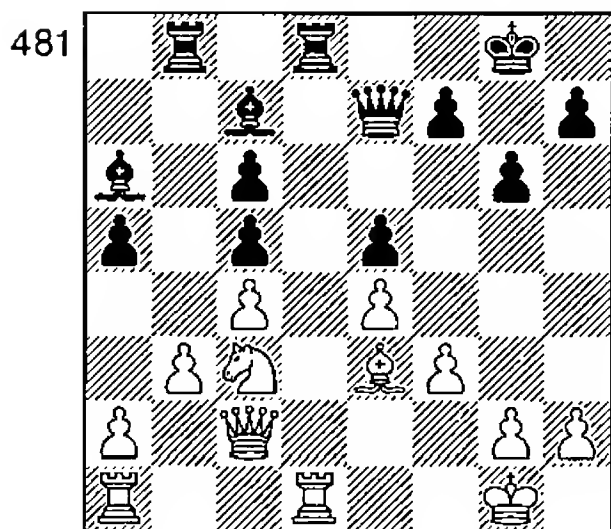


26. ♖xg7+ ...

A forced variation destroying the enemy king's fortress is usually best. It is already possible to draw the curtain.

26... ♔xg7 27. ♖xa7 ♖f7 28. ♗h3 h5
29. ♗xe6 ♗f5 30. ♖xe7 ♗xe6 31. ♖xe6
♖b7 32. ♜e4 ♖xb3 33. ♜xc5 ♖c3 34.
♜e4 1-0

No. 165: Mind Over Matter



Q. How should Black proceed?

Black's position is obviously worse — the queenside pawns are weak and White threatens to win the c5-pawn by targeting it with his pieces. At first it seems as if Black cannot prevent this plan or organize counterplay on a different front. However, in the game **Ljublinsky—Botvinnik** (Moscow 1943), Black found an unexpected solution.

The ability to defend actively is a cornerstone of contemporary chess. Much of opening theory promises a slight advantage to White and it is mostly by means of active counterplay that Black can equalize the position or claim the initiative. The game of chess is a synthesis of many well-known methods

and motifs, and active defense is just one way to reverse the course of an unfavorable game. It increases the role of tactics relative to strategy.

Rather than passively await one's fate, it is often beneficial to increase the dynamism of the pieces by means of a sacrifice; to transform "matter" into "spirit." Such a sacrifice can disrupt the mobility and coordination of the attacking units. If a counterattack can then be launched against a vulnerable enemy king, it increases the chances of success.

The positional sacrifice of a small amount of material is now considered to be a typical method for launching a counterattack. It often allows the defender to turn the tables and wrest the initiative from his opponent. This is especially true in the middlegame, when the positional compensation can outweigh the small material deficit.

Thus, the true worth of the pieces depends on the particulars of the position. When a player evaluates a position, he must look beyond the standard point values of the pieces and take into account the factors of space, mobility, and force. The fighting value of the remaining units is a prime feature of the resulting position.

25... ♖d4!

If the sacrifice is accepted, it will un-double Black's pawns, create a strong passed pawn, and hinder the mobility of the opponent's pieces. It also allows Black's bishops to become more active, and a pawn attack on the kingside becomes a possibility.

Botvinnik noted, "This sacrifice could not be delayed. It is possible only if Black retains one rook for the attack."

Without the remaining rook, Black's bishops would not be dangerous, and White would win if he were allowed to trade a pair of rooks.

26. ♖e2? ...

Black would have encountered more problems after 26. ♙xd4 cxd4 27. ♖a4 with ♗b2-d3.

26... ♙c8

27. ♙xd4? ...

Again, White should have taken with the bishop and blockaded the passed pawn by ♗c1-d3.

27... cxd4

28. ♙f2 ...

Another inaccuracy. The bishop would be better off on d2, where it would keep an eye on both the kingside and the queenside.

28... c5

29. ♖f1 f5

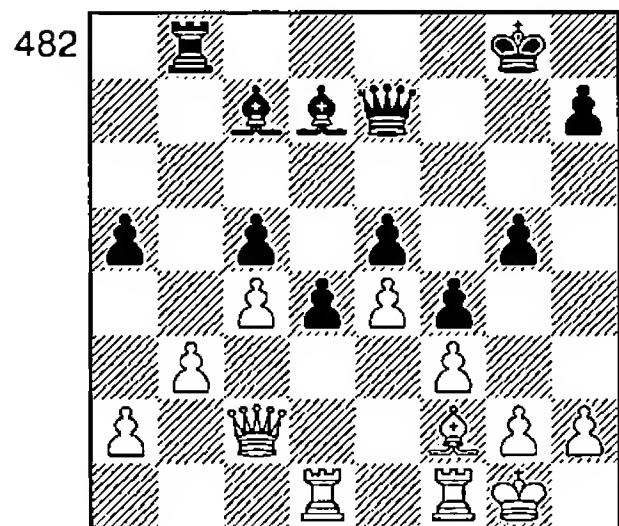
30. ♙g3 ...

After 30. exf5 gxf5, Black could create two connected passed pawns in the center supported by the two bishops.

30... ♙d7

31. ♖ad1 f4

32. ♙f2 g5



Comparing this position with the previous diagram, it is possible to think

that they came from two different games. Here Black's positional plusses outweigh the material deficit.

33. g4? ...

White loses his nerve. The threat of ...g5-g4 was unpleasant, but this weakening of the kingside only helps Black to attack. It was necessary to try and break on the queenside by b3-b4.

33... fxg3

34. ♙xg3 ♙h3

35. ♖f2 h5

36. ♖fd2 h4

37. ♙f2 ♖f8

Black develops the offensive step by step. White's pieces are very poorly placed.

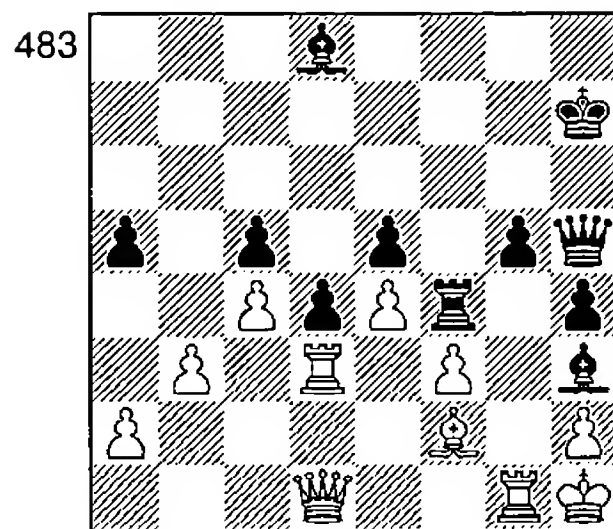
38. ♖d3 ♖f4

39. ♖b1 ♖h7

40. ♖g1 ♙d8

41. ♖e2 ♖f7

42. ♖d1 ♖h5



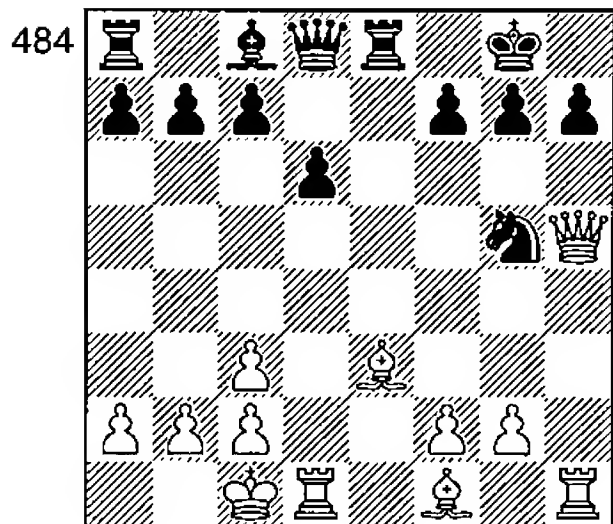
43. ♙e3 ...

It is impossible to prevent the advance 43...g4. Now the resulting end-game is lost for White.

43... ♖xf3+ 44. ♖xf3 ♖xf3 45. ♙xg5 ♖xd3 46. ♙xd8 ♖e3 47. ♙b6 ♖xe4 48. ♙xc5 ♖e2 49. ♖d1 ♙g4 50. h3 ♙xh3 51. b4 ♙f5 52. ♙d6 d3 53. bxa5 h3 0-1

White resigned. The correctness of the sacrifice 25...♖d4! cannot be proven, but it posed White difficulties that he was unable to negotiate. Black achieved a much deserved victory in this game.

No. 166: Defensive Sacrifice



Q. Evaluate this position and find an effective means of counterplay for Black.

Having a keen sense of danger is a must in difficult positions. In the game **Kupreichik—Yusupov** (USSR Championship 1980), White's stance on the kingside looks menacing. White has developed his king's rook by means of sacrificing his h-pawn and has two strong bishops at his disposal. If Black now plays 14...h6, there follows 15. ♗d4 ♞e6 16. ♗xg7 ♞xg7 17. ♖h6 f5 18. ♖d3 with a strong attack. Therefore, Yusupov decides to change the strategic character of the position.

14... ♖xe3!

With this exchange sacrifice, Black eliminates a critical enemy piece and minimizes White's attacking possibilities. The material concession is insignificant because of White's doubled c-pawns and isolated e3-pawn.

15. fxe3 ♔e7

16. ♗c4! ...

White offers a sacrifice in turn, hoping to use the e-file.

16... h6!

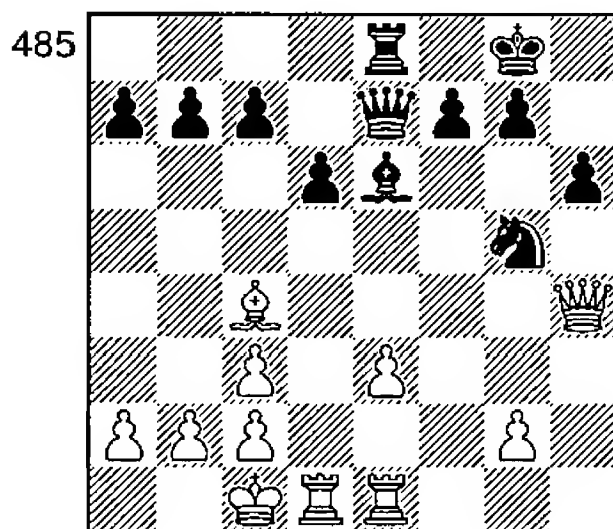
Yusupov takes time to bolster his king's position, knowing that White's pawn weakness aren't going anywhere.

17. ♖he1 ♗e6

18. ♖h4 ...

White's last two moves indicate that he has given up the attack.

18... ♖e8



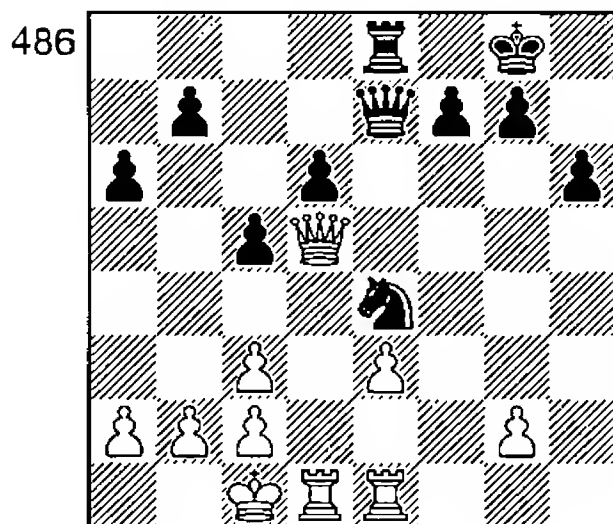
Black aims to create an outpost on e4.

19. ♖d4 a6

20. ♗d5 c5

21. ♖d3 ♗xd5

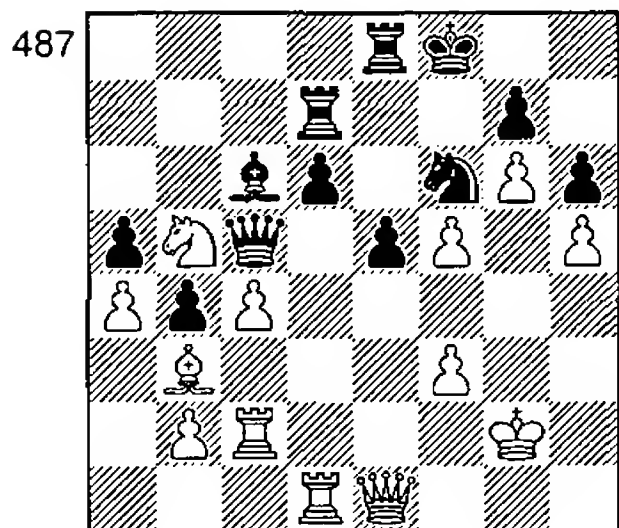
22. ♖xd5 ♞e4



The excellent position of the knight and White's numerous pawn weaknesses offer Black the better chances. Yusupov went on to win.

23. ♖f1 ♜c7 24. ♖f5 g6 25. ♖f4 ♜e5
26. ♜d3 ♜e7 27. a4 ♜e6 28. ♚b1 h5
29. c4 g5 30. ♖f3 h4 31. ♜b3 ♜d7 32.
♜b6 ♜g7 33. ♜d3 f6 34. ♖f1 ♜e7 35.
♜fd1 ♜g4 36. ♜xd6 ♜xd6 37. ♜xd6
♜f7 38. ♜d2 ♜xc4 39. b3 ♜c3 40. ♜d3
♜e5 41. ♜d8 ♜c7 42. ♜d5 ♜c6 43.
♜c1 ♜xd5 44. ♜xd5 g4 45. ♜d2 ♜g6
46. ♜e2 ♜h7 47. ♜f2 ♜h5 48. e4 ♜e5
49. ♜e3 h3 50. gxh3 gxh3 51. ♜f2 ♜g5
52. ♜d3 h2 53. ♜d1 ♜g1 0-1

No. 167: Turning the Tables



Q. How can White defend against the threats along the a8-h1 diagonal?

In the game **Ragozin—Furman** (Moscow 1949), White has serious pawn weaknesses because of his previous risky play. White's situation is critical in view of the threats along the long diagonal. In particular, Black is threatening the winning shot 44...e4.

44. ♜d5! ...

A remarkable counterstrike! By

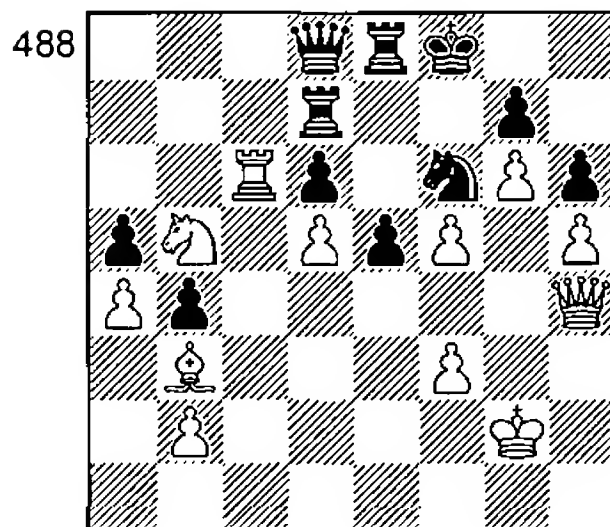
means of an exchange sacrifice, White regains the initiative in a sharp position. Ragozin was a specialist in this motif.

44... ♜xd5

45. cxd5 ♜b6

46. ♜c6 ♜d8

47. ♜h4 ...



White agrees to trade queens as he judges that the ensuing ending favors him.

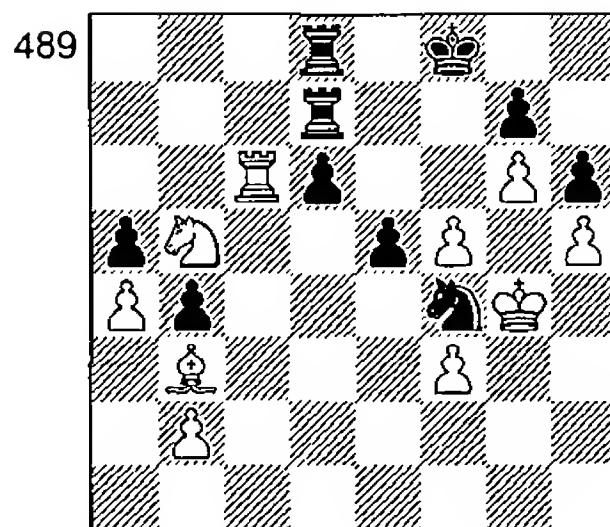
47... ♜xd5

Ragozin indicated that it would have been better for Black to play 47...♜e7, threatening to win a pawn in better circumstances by 48...♜xd5 49. ♜xe7+ ♜xe7. In this case, the rightness of the move 44. ♜d5 would remain to be seen.

48. ♜xd8 ♜f4+

49. ♜g3 ♜exd8

50. ♜g4 ...

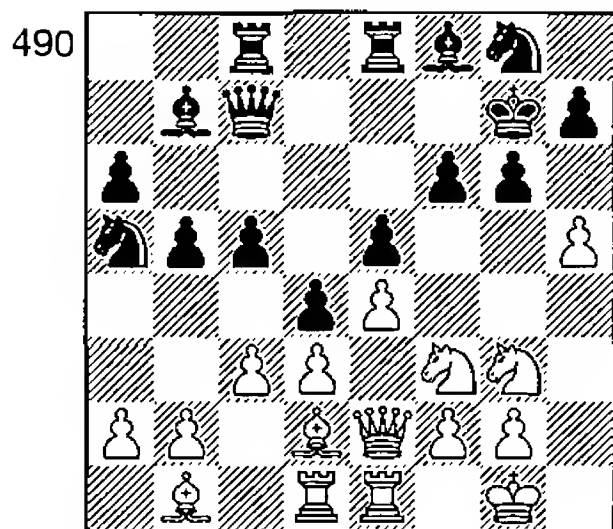


White's kingside pawns, which a few moves ago were objects for attack, are now a menacing force.

50...♔e7 51. ♖c7 ♜c8 52. ♖d5+ ♖xd5 53. ♜xc8 ♖e3+ 54. ♖h3 ♖xf5 55. ♜a8 ♖d4 56. ♖d5 ♖e6 57. ♜xa5 ♖f4+ 58. ♖g4 ♖xd5 59. ♜xd5 ♜c7 60. ♜b5 ♜c4+ 61. ♖g3 b3 62. a5 ♜a4 63. ♜xb3 ♜xa5 64. ♜b7+ ♖f6 65. ♖g4 ♜a1 66. ♜f7+ ♖e6 67. f4 ♖g1+ 68. ♖f3 exf4 69. ♜xg7 ♖g5 70. ♜c7 ♜xh5 71. g7 ♖g5 72. b4 h5 73. b5 h4 74. ♖xf4 ♖g1 75. b6 h3 76. b7 h2 77. b8♜ ♜f1+ 78. ♖g3 1-0

No. 168:

Avoid Opening Lines to Your King



Q. Should Black play a) 22...♖c6; or b) 22...g5?

22 ... ♖c6?

In the game **Lutskan—I. Ivanov** (Ventpils 1976), Black makes a serious error, underestimating White's threats against his castled position. Black should avoid opening the position with 22...g5, even though this would create a hole on f5, which itself was dangerous enough.

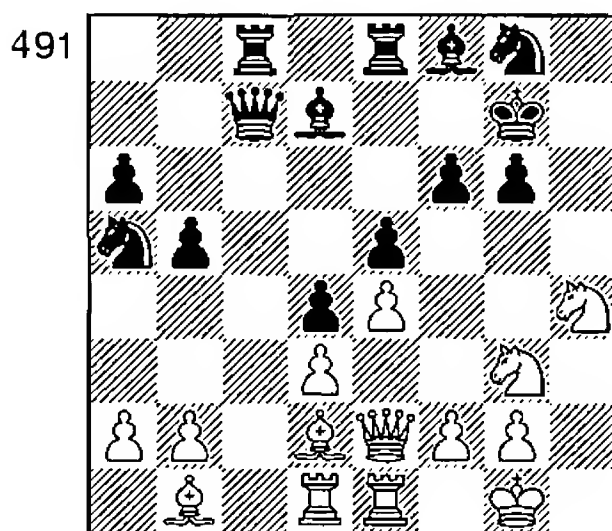
23. hxg6 hxg6

24. ♖h4 ♖d7

A capture on g6 was threatened; for example, 24...♖b7? 25. ♖xg6 ♖xg6 26. ♜h5+ ♖g7 27. ♖f5#.

25. cxd4 cxd4

As a result of the pawn exchange, White's dark-squared bishop is fairly active along both the c1-h6 and e1-a5 diagonals. Indeed, it will later play a decisive role. Yet capturing with the e-pawn would have given the center to White.



26. ♖gf5+! gxf5

Acceptance of the sacrifice is practically forced.

27. exf5 ...

As a result of the sacrifice, the black king has been stripped of his defenses, while the squares e6 and g6 are controlled by White. A launching point for the rook — the e4 square — is also available.

27 ... ♖d6

28. ♜h5 ...

29 ♜e4 is now threatened.

28 ... ♖c6

29. ♖g6 ♖f8

Black defends against mate; e.g., 29...♖b7? 30. ♜h8+ ♖f7 31. ♜h7#.

30. ♜c1 ...

Another piece enters the attack. A sacrifice on c6 is possible in a number of variations.

30 ... ♔d8

31. ♕h8+ ...

White could also play 31. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 32. ♖e4. However, he preferred a more forcing variation.

31 ... ♔f7

32. ♘xf8 ♗xf8

33. ♕h7+ ♗g7

34. ♕g6+ ♔f8

35. ♗b4+ ...

The bishop emerges as if from an ambush.

35 ... ♘e7

36. a3 ...

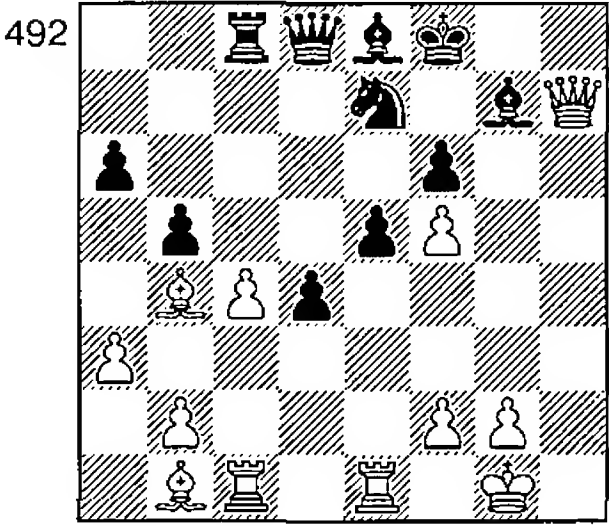
Now the light-squared bishop can join in the fun.

36 ... ♘c4

Just the threat of activating the light-squared bishop is enough for Black to give up his knight to block the diagonal. Yet a complex of other threats, especially ♖e4-g4, is quite enough for victory.

37. dxc4 ♗e8

38. ♕h7



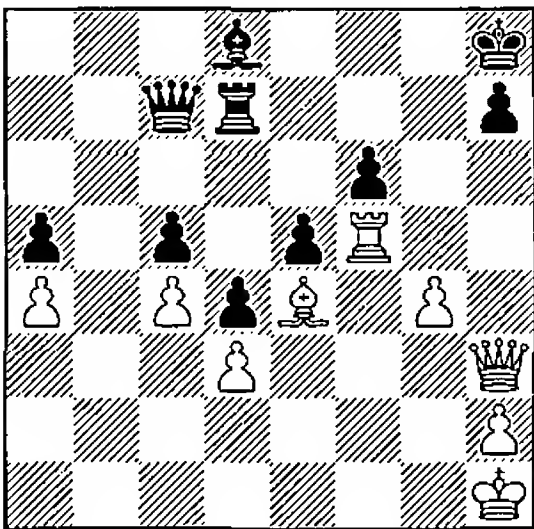
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Chapter VI

The Endgame

No. 169: The Hazards of Applying Rules Mechanically

493



Q. In the diagram position, does the presence of opposite-colored bishops presage a draw?

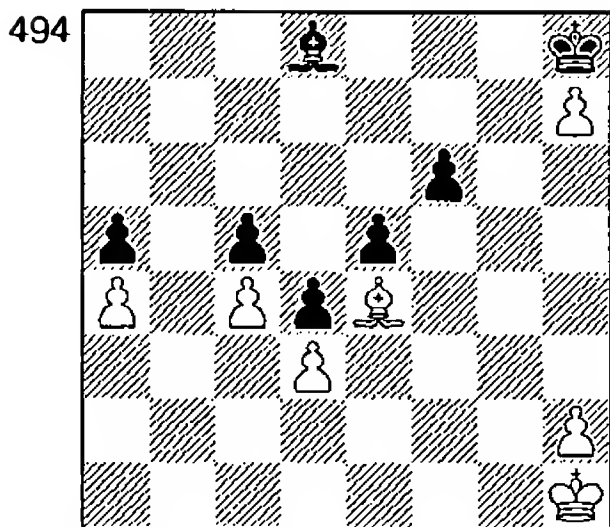
Positions in which the players have a similar correlation of forces are especially difficult to evaluate. The reader likely knows that opposite-colored bishops often intensify the fight in the middlegame, when the major pieces are still present and attacks on the king are possible. In such cases, it is easier for the player who possesses the initiative to at-

tack the opponent's weak points. The same "rule" states that, in endings with opposite-colored bishops, even a material advantage of three connected passed pawns may not be enough to win.

In this connection it may appear that the defending side should always strive for simplification, even if it means accepting minor material losses. But it's not that simple. One of the most important phases of a game of chess is the transition from the middlegame into the endgame. A complicated question in itself, it is exacerbated in positions with opposite-colored bishops. The diagram position, from the game **Levenfish–Kan** (Moscow 1927), confirms this complexity. Here, Kan has an extra pawn, but the precarious position of the black king and the catastrophic weakness of the light squares are dangerous for Black.

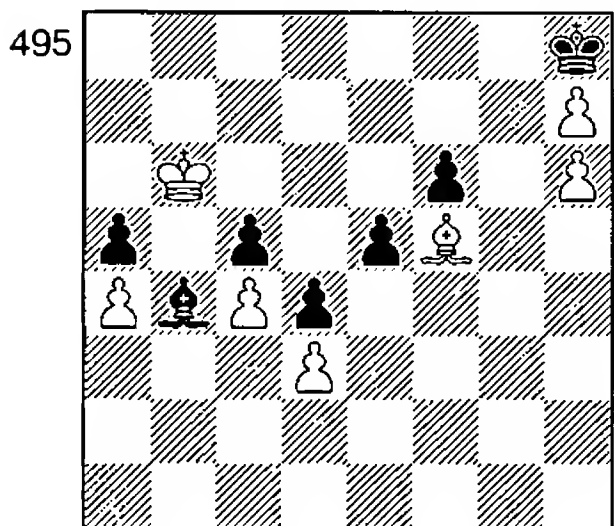
49. g5 ...

Having chosen this move, it was necessary for White to accurately evaluate the endgame arising after 49...♖f7 50. g6 ♖g7 51. ♗h5 ♗d7 52. ♖xh7+ ♖xh7 53. ♗xh7+ ♗xh7 54. gxh7:



In this position, material is equal. Black's pawns are blocked, and the black king holds the h7-pawn at bay. However, it is the modest pawn on h2 that will prove decisive. White's plan would be to intrude on the queenside via e4, when Black doesn't have time to defend the queenside pawns with the king. For example: 54...f5 55. ♕f5 ♕f6 56. ♖g2 ♖g7 57. ♖f3 ♖f7 58. ♗e4 ♗e7 59. ♘d5.

Therefore, Black would have to defend the queenside pawns with the bishop, leaving the king to guard the h7-pawn. The game could then develop as follows: 54...♗e7 55. ♖g2 ♗f8 56. ♖f3 ♗h6 57. ♗f5 ♖g7 58. ♖e4 ♗d2 59. ♖d5 ♗b4 60. ♖c6 ♗a3 61. ♖b5 ♗b4. Black's position seems unassailable, but now the h2-pawn is used to put Black in *Zugzwang*: 62. h4! ♖h8 63. h5 ♖g7 64. h6 ♖h8 65. ♖b6:



Here Black must lose either the c5- or the a5-pawn, when White wins easily.

Thus, Black rightly avoided this end-game and instead chose a more complicated fight with the major pieces. This increases the probability of error, as the further course of the game shows.

49... f×g5

50. ♖xe5 ...

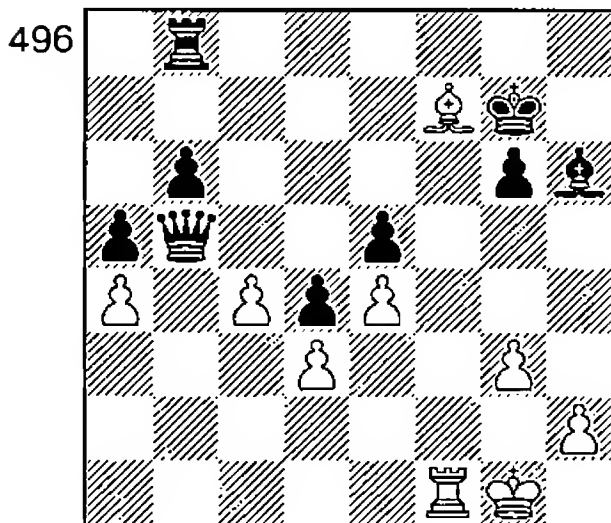
Black did not have to wait long for a mistake. White should play 50. ♗f8+ ♖g7 51. ♗e8! with irresistible threats against h7, for instance, 51...h6 52. ♗f5. After the text move, Black is saved.

50... ♗xe5

51. ♗xd7 ♗e7

And a draw was agreed. ½-½

No. 170: Not All Opposite-Colored Bishop Endings Are Drawn



Q. Which recapture is better for White: a) a4xb5; or b) c4xb5?

33. axb5! ...

A very important and instructive moment! This is the correct way to capture. In the game **Podgaets—Vaganian** (Dubna 1970), White retains the possibility of playing on both sides of the board. This is a very important factor in an oppo-

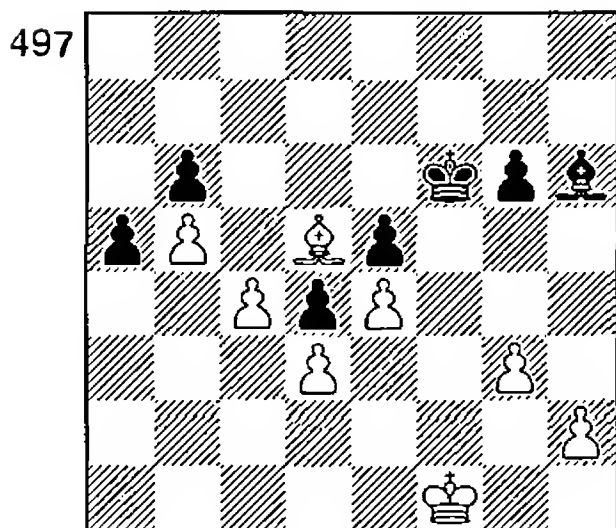
site-colored bishop endgame. After the hackneyed 33. cxb5 Black draws easily. But now his bishop has no time to gain control of the a3-f8 diagonal.

33... ♖f8

Of course, Black is not required to exchange rooks, but this does not affect the outcome, as Black doesn't get the chance to push the a-pawn: 33... ♖a8 34. ♙d5 ♖a7 35. c5! bxc5 36. b6.

34. ♙d5 ♖xf1+

35. ♙xf1 ♙f6



36. c5! ...

This clearly illustrates the idea behind 33. axb5: White gains passed pawns on both flanks. As a rule in such situations, even the presence of opposite-colored bishops is no salvation.

36... bxc5

37. b6 ♙f8

38. b7 ♙d6

39. h4 ♙e7

On 39...g5, White plays 40. ♙g2 ♙g6 (40...g4 41. ♙e2 and the king marches over to the queenside) 41. ♙f3 gxf5 42. gxf5 ♙h5 43. ♙g3 and then 44. ♙f7+, 45. ♙g4 when the king will break through on the queenside by way of f5.

40. g4 ♙d7

41. g5 ♙c7

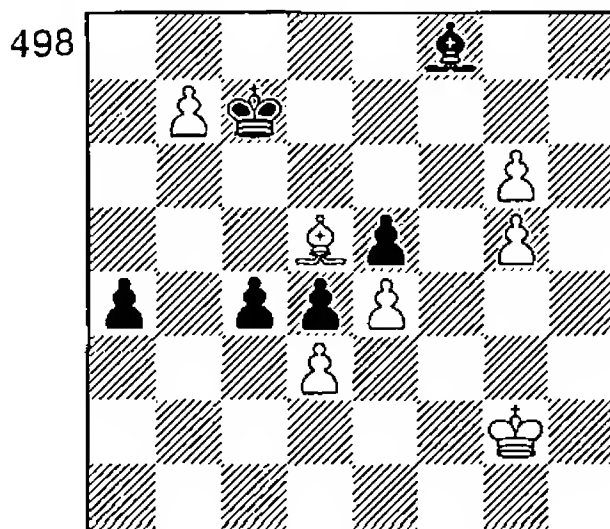
42. ♙g2 a4

43. h5 ♙f8

If 43...gxf5, then 44. ♙g3-h4 wins.

44. bxc6 c4

Black makes use of his last chance. After 45. ♙xc4 ♙g7! Black blocks the pawn and White's king cannot invade the opponent's camp because his own g6-pawn is in the way: 46. ♙d5 a3 47. ♙f3 a2 48. ♙xa2 ♙b7 49. ♙g4 ♙c7 50. ♙f5 ♙d6.



45. g7! ...

It is clear from the previous note that this pawn sacrifice facilitates the win.

45... ♙xg7

46. ♙xc4 ♙xb7

47. ♙f3 1-0

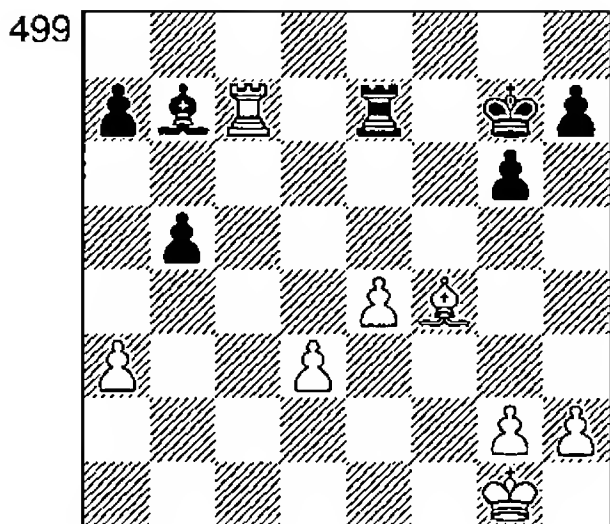
Black resigned, as after 47...♙c7 48. ♙g4 ♙d6 49. ♙f5 ♙e7 50. ♙g6 ♙f8 51. ♙h7 he is in *Zugzwang*.

No. 171: Position Outweighs Material

(See Diagram 499)

Q. Evaluate the prospects for both sides.

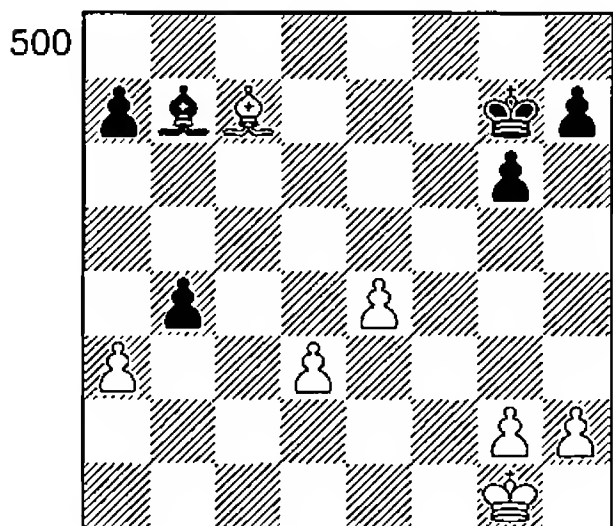
In the game **Bogolyubov—Ed. Lasker** (New York 1924), the move chosen by Black led quickly to a lost position.



36...♔f7 37. ♖xe7 ♔xe7 38. ♔d2 ♔e6 39. ♔f2 ♔d6 40. ♔e3 ♔c5 41. ♔a5 ♔c8 42. ♔d8 ♔d7

It is easy to win in this position by 43. ♔e7+ followed by d3-d4-d5. After that the two connected passed pawns roll unstopably.

Trading rooks at once would set White considerably more complex problems: 36...♖xc7 37. ♔xc7 and now 37...b4!:



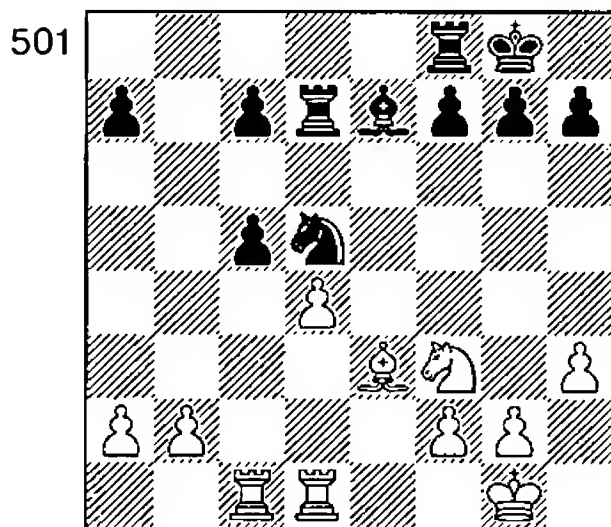
After 38. axb4 ♔a6 39. d4 ♔d3 40. e5 ♔c4 White can't win despite his two extra pawns. For example, 41. ♖f2 a6 42. ♔e3 ♔d5 43. g3 ♔f7 44. ♔f4 h6 45. ♔d6 ♔e6 46. ♔f8 h5 47. ♔g5 ♔e4, and the result is a draw, as Black controls all the important light squares.

However, things are not so simple, because after 37...b4 White can retain winning chances with 38. ♖f2.

This example shows that a small material advantage in endings with opposite-colored bishops is sometimes better than a larger one. In the variation with 37...b4 38. axb4, White has two extra pawns, but cannot win. Yet, after 38. ♖f2 bxa3 White keeps the advantage.

The examples above prove that not all endings with opposite-colored bishops are drawn. However, we must admit that these endgames do result in a draw more often than any other endings. One reason is that it is impossible for the side with the initiative or material advantage to exchange bishops and enter into a winning pawn ending.

No. 172: Bishop vs. Knight I

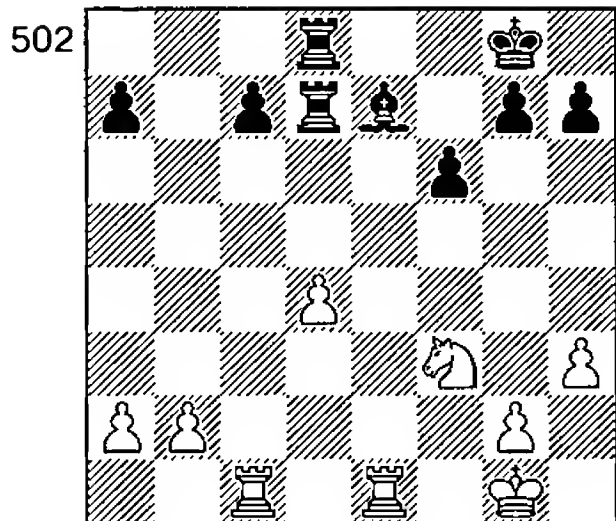


Q. In the diagram position, suggest a plan for Black.

18... ♖xe3

By exchanging the knight, Black envisions an endgame in which the bishop is stronger than the knight because there are pawns on both flanks.

19. fxe3 cxd4
20. exd4 ♖fd8
21. ♖e1 f6



This position was reached in the game **Giterman–Aronin** (Tbilisi 1957). How can it be evaluated? What assets does each side possess? As mentioned above, the bishop has an obvious advantage against the knight. In some cases, Black can focus his attack on the d4-pawn – which is the glaring weakness in White’s position.

White has other opportunities. He can easily centralize all the pieces, including the king. And attacking the isolated pawns on the queenside is a possibility.

Therefore, the chances for both sides are probably equal. In such cases, the winner will be the one who best implements his plan or “imposes his will” on the position.

22. ♖c6 ♖b8

The white rook must be stopped from getting to a6.

23. b3 ♖b6

24. ♖ec1 ♖d6

25. ♔f2 ♖e7

Black prevents the centralization of White’s king. Black would like to exchange rooks in order to have the better

of a bishop-versus-knight ending with pawns on both flanks.

26. ♖6c4 ♖a6

27. ♖4c2 ...

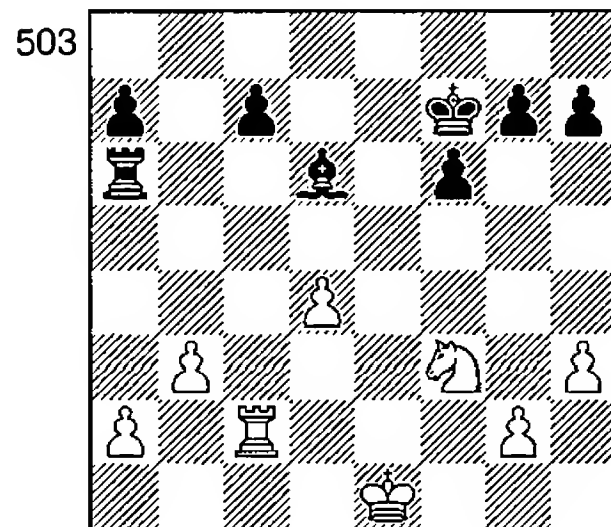
White protects the pawn with a rook. 27. a4 would be a positional mistake because of the resulting weakness of the b3-pawn.

27... ♖e4

28. ♖e1 ♖xe1

29. ♙xe1 ♔f7

The role of the kings increases as the number of pieces in play decreases.



30. ♔d2 ...

If you have a dark-squared bishop, as Black does in this case, then your pawns should be placed on light squares. This is especially true in same-colored bishop endings and in bishop-versus-knight endings. In such cases, the bishop and the pawns complement one another. White’s aim, when the opponent has a dark-squared bishop, should be to arrange his pawns on the light squares. Worthy of attention was 30. g4.

30... h5

31. ♔d3 ♔e6

32. ♙d2 ♖a5

Black’s rook could get into trouble once the white knight lands on c4.

Therefore, Black urgently spirits it away from the danger zone. White now had the chance to trade the knight for the bishop, but he was afraid of entering a worse ending. He should play 33. ♖c4 ♜g5 34. ♖xd6 ♔xd6 35. ♔c4, when the game likely would end in a draw.

This was the first moment that White showed any indecision in choosing a continuation.

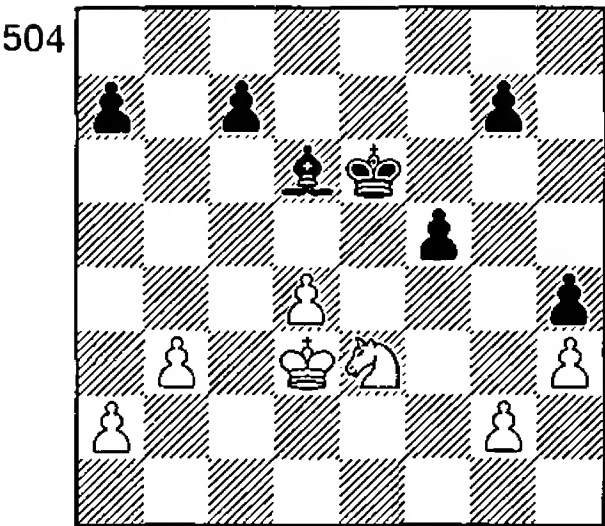
33. ♖e4 h4
34. ♔c4 ♜f5
35. ♜e2 ♔d7
36. ♜f2 ...

White commits a fundamental error because he misinterprets the situation. He needed to play actively. It was necessary for White to decide where he could expect to create an advantage in force. Since White has a pawn majority on the queenside, he should have played 36. b4, followed by 37. a4.

- 36... ♜xf2
37. ♖xf2 ♔e6
38. ♔d3? ...

Even now it is not too late for White to advance his queenside pawns.

- 38... ♔d5
39. ♖d1 f5
40. ♖e3+ ♔e6



Black has better winning chances because of the possibility of creating an outside passed pawn on the kingside. White's difficulties are aggravated by the fact that it is impossible to transition into a pawn ending.

41. ♖c4 ♜f4

This move is an excellent example of the “human” influence on the flow of a chess game. After the game, Aronin told me that he had found a winning variation during the adjournment: 41...g5 42. ♖xd6 ♔xd6 43. b4 g4 44. ♔e3 ♔d5 45. ♜f4 g3 46. ♜xf5 ♔xd4 47. ♔g4 ♔e3 48. ♜xh4 ♔f2 and Black queens first. So he knew how to win, but he chose a different move! My explanation is that he did not trust himself at heart. Confidence in one's abilities is the true mark of a master.

42. ♖b2 ...

Black's last move increased White's defensive resources; however, he fails to take advantage of it.

42. ... g5
43. ♖d1 ♜d6
44. ♜e3 ♜h2
45. ♖c4 ♜f4
46. ♖b2 ♜g3
47. ♖c4 ♜f2

The bishop goes to a diagonal from which it can attack White's center pawn.

48. ♖a3 c6

The threat of 49. ♖b5 must be prevented.

49. ♖c2 ♜g1

The final preparations for a breakthrough. The bishop moves away from the king, so that White cannot gain a tempo when moving the king to e2.

50. a4 ...

This comes too late to be of any help now.

50... g4

51. b4 a6

52. ♔c4 f4!

A simple breakthrough which ends the game.

53. hxg4 ...

Or 53. ♘e1 f3, and so on.

53... f3

54. ♔d3 fxg2

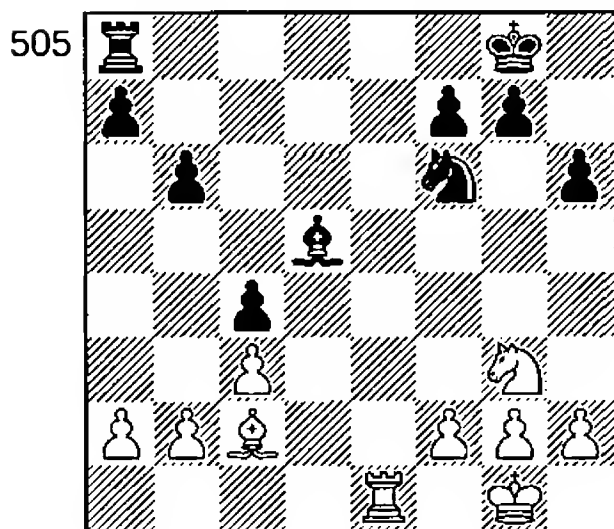
55. ♘e1 h3

56. ♘f3 h2

0-1

No. 173:

The Power of Centralization



Q. Evaluate the diagram position and suggest a plan for White.

This position, from the game **Lu-
tikov–Smejkal** (Polanica Zdroj 1972),
looks deceptively simple. White has a
clear advantage based on the point d4
as an outpost for the white knight and
Black's weak c4-pawn. In addition, the
white king is more mobile and has access
to the center and the queenside, while
the black king is cut off on the e-file.
And if Black were to exchange rooks,

the white king could freely approach the
c-pawn.

24. ♘f5 ...

White begins by moving the knight to
the dominating post on d4.

24... ♔f8

24... ♔e8? (to oppose on the e-file)
fails to 25. ♔xe8+ ♘xe8 26. ♘e7+,
winning the bishop.

25. f3 ...

White prepares a path to activate the
king.

25... ♔c8

25... ♔e8 is still bad: after 26. ♔xe8+
♘xe8 27. ♔f2 ♘c7 28. ♔e3 ♘e6 29.
♔e4 ♘xe4 30. ♔xe4, White's central-
ized king offers good winning chances.
This variation illustrates the fighting
power of the king in the center. Here
it is perfectly placed to assist the other
pieces, and it cannot be disturbed by en-
emy units other than by isolated checks.
In the ending, the king should be put to
work!

26. ♔f2 ♔c5

27. ♘d4 ...

If he allowed 27... ♔b5, White would
have to switch over to passive defense by
28. ♔b1.

27... ♔a5

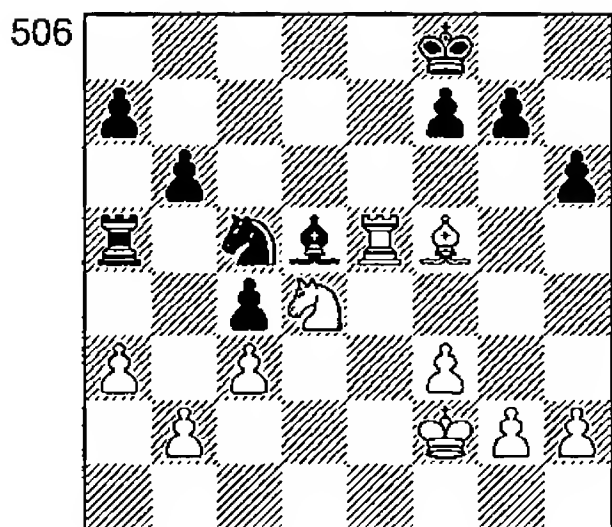
Black plans to put the knight on c5.
However, this idea can hardly be con-
doned. The move 27... ♔b7 would have
made available both d5 for the knight
and the fifth rank for the rook. In this
case, it would be more difficult for White
to make use of his small edge.

28. a3 ♘d7

It was not too late to return the rook
to c5.

29. ♔f5 ♘c5

30. ♔e5 ...



30 ... ♔e6?

The decisive error. It sets the trap 31. ♕xe6 ♖d3+ or 31. ♖xe6+ ♗xe6 32. ♕xe6 ♖d3+, but grandmasters normally do not fall for such swindles.

Generally speaking, there is nothing wrong with setting a trap. However, the opponent is not forced to take the bait. He could conceivably find a move to create trouble for you, in which case the trap would backfire. Experienced players set traps that meet the needs of the position and which will not result in a worse position if the opponent refuses the bait.

Black needed to play 30...♗b7 instead.

31. ♕e3! ♕xf5
32. ♖xf5 ♖e8
33. ♖d5 ...

White cut off the black king from the center. Note how he centralizes his own pieces while keeping the opponent's men away from the zone.

33... ♖f6

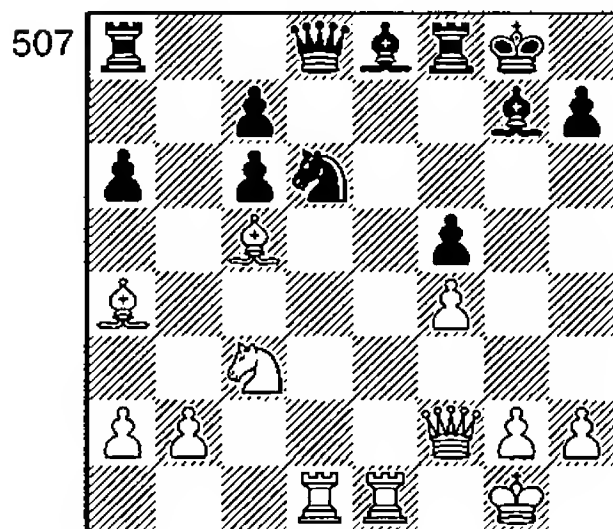
White threatened 34. ♖c6 and 35. ♖d8 with checkmate.

34. h4 ♖a4

This is forced, as 36. h5 was threatened. But now White proceeds to a winning ending.

35. ♖xa5 bxa5 36. ♖c6 ♖xb2 37. ♖xa5 ♖f7 38. ♖d4 ♖d3 39. ♖xc4 ♖e1 40. ♖e3 f5 41. f4 g5 42. fxg5 f4 43. ♖c4 hxg5 44. hxg5 ♖xg2 45. ♖e5+ ♖e6 46. ♖e4 a5 47. g6 ♖f6 48. c4 a4 49. c5 ♖e3 50. c6 ♖f5 51. ♖xf4 ♖d4 52. ♖e4 1-0

No. 174: Transitioning to the Endgame



A. Evaluate the position for both sides.

B. Does either side have an advantage? With White to move, how should he continue?

White has more space. This is reflected in the fact that all of the opponent's pieces are huddled on the last three ranks. White's perfectly placed rooks control the open center files, and Black's pawn structure is hopelessly spoiled. As Tartakover once wrote, an isolated pawn spreads gloom all over the board. He also likened a doubled pawn to a repenting sinner.

Thus, White only needs to find the right plan, which is to force the opponent to seek salvation in an ending. For this purpose, he resorts to exchanges.

Trading pieces is a basic tool for transitioning from a middlegame into an ending. At the same time, simplifying the position is one of the major methods to convert an advantage. The chessplayer who makes such a decision also benefits because the reduced material decreases the number of pitfalls on the road to victory. However, accuracy is still required. In chess there is no place for complacency. It is no secret that victory will not come by itself. This is a skill that should be acquired early in one's training.

In our case, White can force a transition to the endgame.

20. ♖d4! ...

White could win a pawn by 20. ♔f3. In that case, though, Black would obtain counterchances and play could get messy. The move in the game is intended to simplify things. Black has only one active piece – the dark-squared bishop. Therefore, it should be exchanged, and then Black will be left defenseless against a coordinated attack in the center and on both flanks.

20... ♗xd4

21. ♕xd4 ♖f6

In view of his kingside weakness, Black too aspires to exchange queens. But Black's compromised pawn structure presages a very difficult ending.

Players who wish to raise their skill level should understand the concept of temporary and permanent weaknesses in a chess position. Possession of a large amount of space or an initiative is a temporary factor that can soon dissipate, but weak pawns are a permanent factor that should be considered for many moves. Naturally, the transition

to an ending requires careful consideration when there are permanent weaknesses in a position.

As a rule, the value of permanent positional factors increases markedly in the endgame.

Such are the general considerations when transitioning into an ending. But general principles are not enough by themselves. In practice, it is necessary to evaluate the characteristics of each individual position.

The signs that define whether a transition to the endgame is favorable are as follows:

- The pawn structure and the presence of permanent weaknesses.
- The possibility of creating a passed pawn.
- The respective positions of the kings.

In the middlegame, a weakening of the pawn structure can often lead to an attack against the king. In the endgame, these weaknesses are exploited in other ways. Usually, pawn weaknesses are of critical importance.

Another important factor is on which flank the pawns are located. Practice shows that pawn weaknesses on the queenside are more significant because it is more difficult for the king (which usually castles on its side of the board) to come to their defense.

Now let us return to the game **Boleslavsky–Fine** (USA–USSR Radio Match 1945).

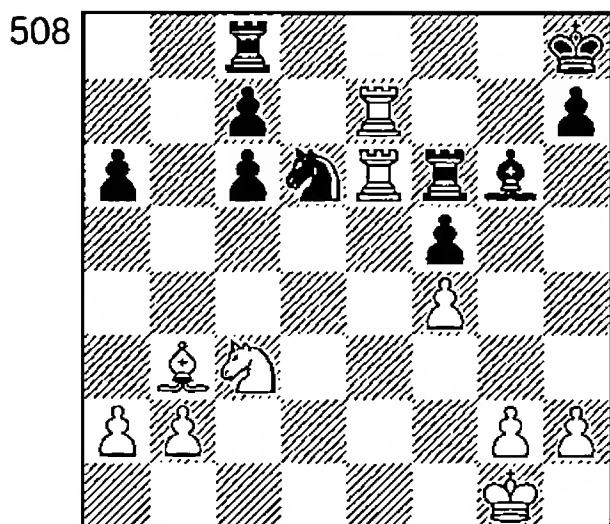
22. ♖b3+ ♔h8

23. ♕xf6+ ♖xf6

24. ♖e7 ♖c8

25. ♖de1 ♗g6

26. ♖le6 ...



By making further exchanges, White highlights the weaknesses in Black's position, and it is impossible for Black to avoid this. If 26... ♖ff8, then 27. ♖e5 and Black can't save the queenside pawns.

26... ♖xe6
 27. ♗xe6 ♖e8
 28. ♖xe8 ♗xe8
 29. ♘a4 ...

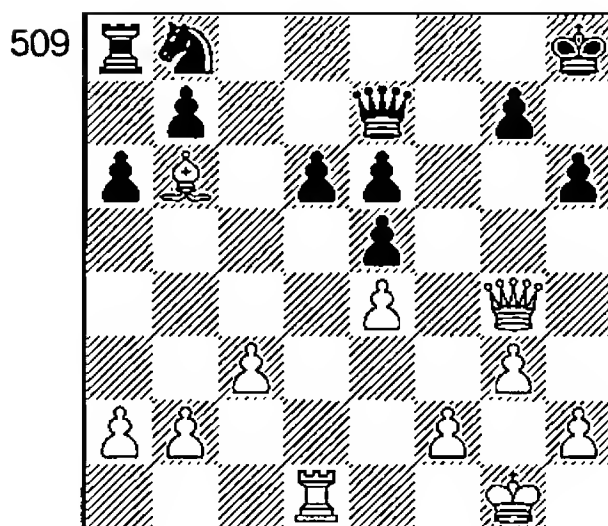
Black has avoided a material deficit, but he is absolutely lost in the endgame.

29... ♔g7 30. ♘c5 a5 31. ♔f2 ♗f7
 32. ♗xf7 ♔xf7 33. b3 h5 34. g3 ♔e7 35.
 ♗e3 ♘b5 36. ♘b7 c5 37. ♘xa5 ♔d6
 38. ♘c4+ ♔d5 39. ♔d3 ♘d6 40. ♘xd6
 cxd6 41. a3 1-0

In chess it is necessary to reevaluate the position on each and every move, and to constantly reassess one's plan of action. One factor that players today always have to consider is the coming endgame. The development of endgame technique has led to a situation where the possibility of simplifying into a favorable or unfavorable ending must constantly be kept in mind. This close connection between the middle-game and endgame is one feature of the modern chess struggle. Thus, the following conclusion can be drawn: *it is impossible to achieve this analytical skill*

without first acquiring the necessary end-game technique.

No. 175: Trading Off the Defender



Q. Does 26. ♔h4 fit the spirit of the position?

26. ♔h4! ...

David Bronstein wrote in numerous publications about the interaction of the forces and the idea of "playing with one piece to the advantage of all the pieces."

This move, from Smyslov–Reshevsky (World Championship Match-Tournament 1948), has that very purpose. White uses the temporary vulnerability of the eighth rank to forcibly win the d6-pawn, and with it the game.

26... ♔d7

In case of 26... ♔xh4 27. gxf4 the white rook and bishop dominate Black's undeveloped rook and knight.

27. ♔d8+ ...

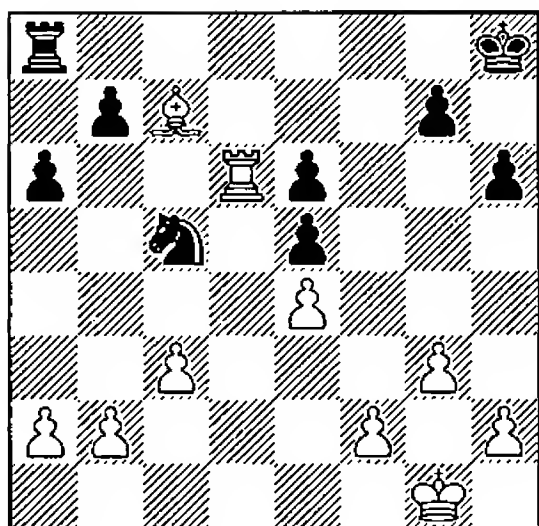
White's systematic strategy has provided him a rare instance of harmonious piece coordination.

27... ♔xd8

28. ♗xd8 ♘d7

29. ♖c7 ♙c5
30. ♖xd6 ...

510

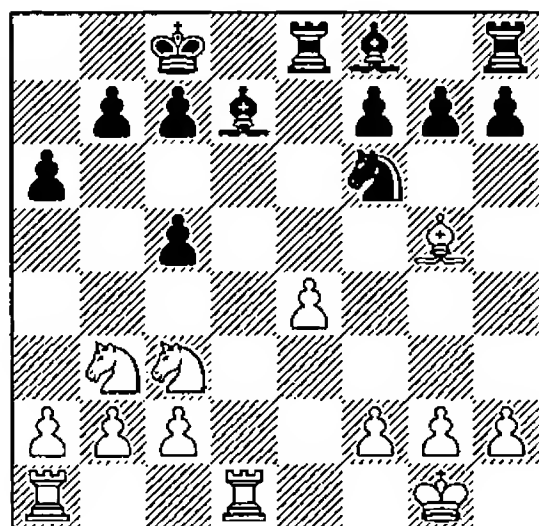


Reshevsky resists doggedly, but his position is hopeless.

30... ♖c8 31. ♙b6 ♙a4 32. ♖xe6 ♙xb2 33. ♖xe5 ♙c4 34. ♖e6 ♙xb6 35. ♖xb6 ♖xc3 36. ♖xb7 ♖c2 37. h4 ♖xa2 38. ♙g2 a5 39. h5 a4 40. ♖a7 ♙g8 41. g4 a3 42. ♙g3 ♖e2 43. ♙f3 ♖a2 44. ♙e3 ♙f8 45. f3 ♖a1 46. ♙f4 a2 47. e5 ♙g8 48. ♙f5 ♖f1 49. ♖xa2 ♖xf3 50. ♙g6 ♙f8 51. ♖a8+ ♙e7 52. ♖a7+ 1-0

No. 176: Unprejudiced Play

511



Q. Should White trade the dark-squared bishop for the knight?

13. ♙xf6! ...

In the game **Gaprindashvili—Eretova** (Vrnjačka Banja 1972), White played without prejudice in the firm belief that the knights are stronger than the bishops in this position. One cannot talk about the advantage of the bishop pair in this case, as they will be overloaded by the defense of the weak doubled pawns on the c- and f-files.

The determining factor in this position is White's kingside pawn majority, which can lead to the creation of a passed pawn. Certainly this is no easy task; however, White has a clear strategic aim — she aspires to simplify and then use the extra pawn on the kingside in the ending.

13... gxf6

14. ♙d5 ♖e6

Capturing the e4-pawn would leave the same pawn structure as in the game.

15. ♙d2

The horse trots over to greener pastures; perhaps to c4, or maybe even to f5. Therefore Black tries to counteract White's threatened domination.

15... h5

16. f3 f5

Black manages to get rid of one weak pawn. However, she loses the bishop pair.

17. exf5 ♖e5

18. ♙c4 ♖xf5

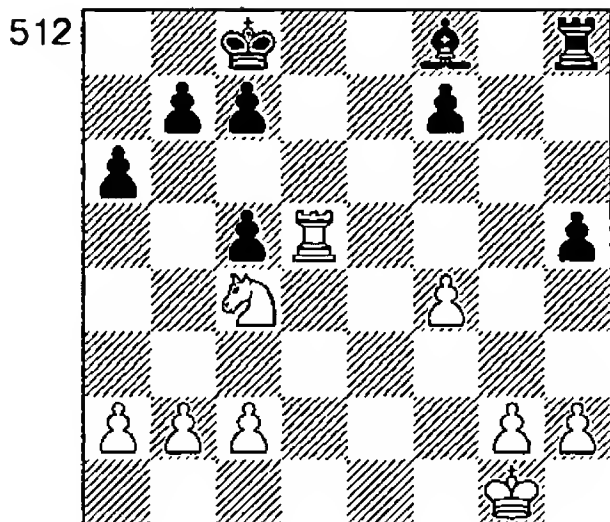
19. f4 ♖xd5

20. ♖xd5 ♙e6

21. ♖ad1 ♙xd5

22. ♖xd5 ...

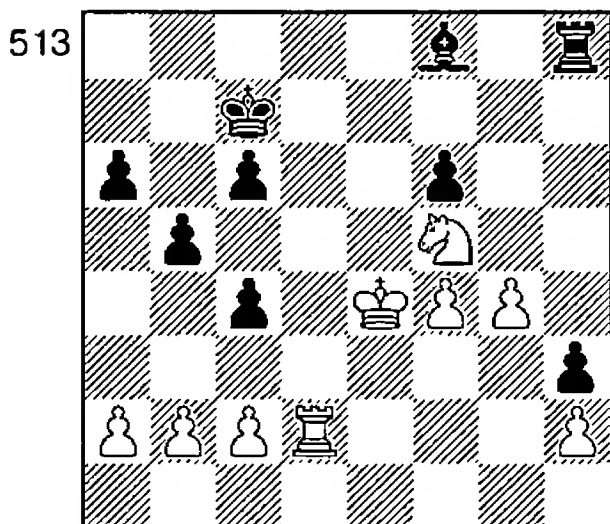
Despite the material balance (see *Diagram 512*), White has a strategically winning ending. All her pieces are more active than Black's and the extra pawn on the kingside will soon decide.



22... f6
 23. ♔f2 b5
 24. ♘d2 c4
 25. ♘e4 ♙e7
 26. ♘g3 h4
 27. ♘f5 ♙f8
 28. ♔f3 h3

Black allows White to make a passed pawn on the g-file; otherwise the white king would access h3 and the black h-pawn would be lost.

29. g4 c6
 30. ♖d2 ♔c7
 31. ♔e4 ...



The first world champion, Steinitz, was an early proponent of the king as a fighting unit. Many believe that the king, coupled with a passed pawn, is approximately equal to a rook.

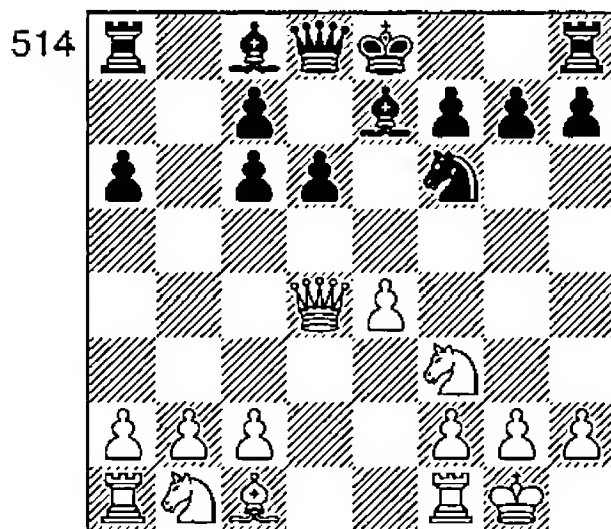
31... ♖g8
 32. ♘d4 ...

Now 32... ♖xg4 is met by 33. ♘e6+. The further course of the game is clear.

32... ♖d6 33. ♔f5 ♔d7 34. ♘e6 ♔e7
 35. ♖e2 ♙f7 36. g5 fxg5 37. fxg5 ♖e8 38.
 g6 ♙g8 39. ♖d2 ♙b8 40. ♔f6 a5 41. ♖d7
 ♙xh2 42. ♖g7+ ♔h8 43. ♔f7 1-0

There is no defense against checkmate by ♖h7.

No. 177: Ruining Your Opponent's Pawn Structure



Q. Suggest a plan for White.

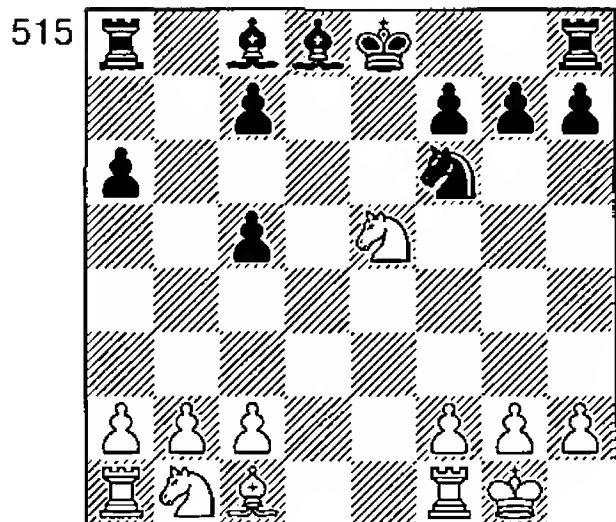
9. e5! ...

It is well known that, all other things being equal, possession of a healthy pawn phalanx is decidedly better than having a shattered pawn structure consisting of several pawn islands. Thus, White decides to try and spoil the opponent's pawn structure.

9... c5
 10. ♖d3 dxe5

On 10... ♘d7 11. exd6 cxd6, weak squares are formed in the center.

11. ♖xd8+ ♙xd8
 12. ♘xe5 ...



In the game **Simagin–Keres** (Moscow 1963), certain weaknesses arose in Black's pawn structure as a result of the opening. The two bishops are hardly enough compensation, so Black will have a difficult defense in the ensuing complicated endgame.

12... ♖e7
 13. ♜e1 ♜e6
 14. ♘c3 0-0
 15. ♙g5 h6
 16. ♘g6 fxg6
 17. ♜xe6 ♜f7

It is easy to see that 17...hxg5 18. ♜xe7 promises Black nothing.

18. ♜ae1 ♜fe8
 19. ♙xf6 ♙xf6

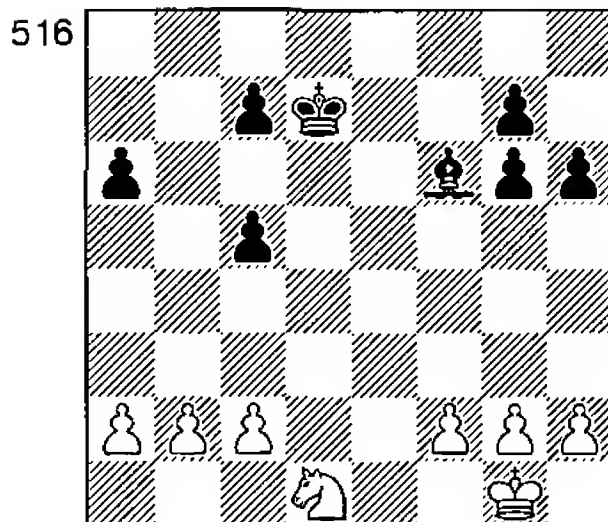
Of course, 19...gxf6 is no better because of 20. ♘d5.

20. ♜xe8 ♜xe8
 21. ♜xe8 ♜xe8
 22. ♘d1 ♘d7

(See Diagram 516)

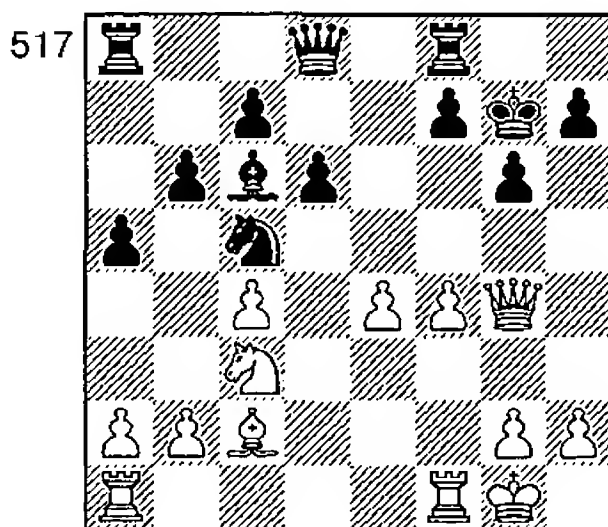
The position has simplified, but Black's pawn weaknesses still doom him to a difficult defense. White will improve his position step by step and drive the black king from the center. Even slight pawn weaknesses are magnified in endings.

23. ♜f1 ♜c6 24. ♜e2 ♙e5 25. h3 ♜d5 26. ♘e3+ ♜e4 27. c3 h5 28. ♘c4



♙f4 29. g3 ♙g5 30. f3+ ♜d5 31. ♜d3 ♙e7 32. ♘e3+ ♜e6 33. ♜e4 g5 34. ♘c4 g6 35. g4 hxg4 36. fxg4 ♙f6 37. a3 ♙e7 38. a4 ♙f6 39. ♘d2 ♙e7 40. ♘f3 ♙f6 41. ♘d2 ♜d6 42. ♘c4+ ♜e6 43. ♘a5 ♜d6 44. ♜d3 ♜d5 45. ♘c4 c6 46. ♘b6+ ♜d6 47. a5 ♙d8 48. ♜c4 ♙c7 49. ♙a4 ♙xa5 50. ♘xc5 ♙b6 51. ♘xa6 ♙e3 52. ♘b4 ♙c1 53. b3 ♙f4 54. ♘c2 ♙e5 55. ♘d4 ♙f6 56. b4 ♙e7 57. ♘f3 ♙f6 58. ♜d3 c5 59. b5 ♜d5 60. c4+ ♜e6 61. ♜e4 ♜d6 62. b6 ♜c6 63. ♘e5+ ♜b7 64. ♘d7 ♙d4 65. ♜d5 1-0

No. 178: Major-Piece Ending



Q. Choose a plan for Black.

In the game **Duras–Rubinstein** (St. Petersburg 1909), the chances for both

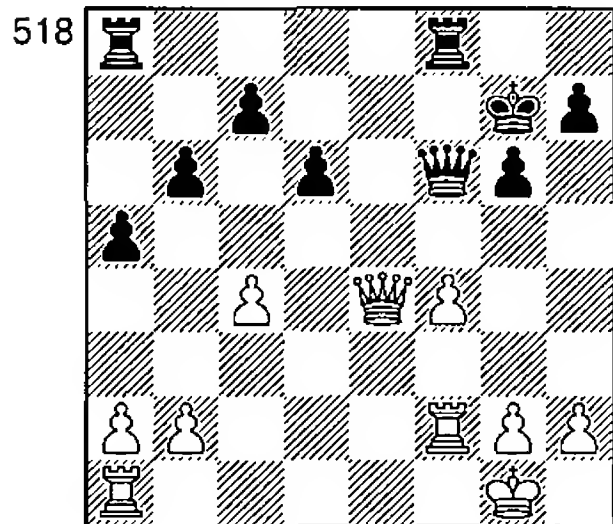
sides are approximately equal. Black plans to capture the e-file by taking advantage of White's piece placement, especially the queen on g4, which allows a double attack.

19... ♖xe4!
 20. ♗xe4 f5
 21. ♔f3 fxe4
 22. ♕xe4 ♕xe4
 23. ♔xe4 ♔f6!

By attacking the b-pawn, Black gains time to put the a8-rook on the e-file.

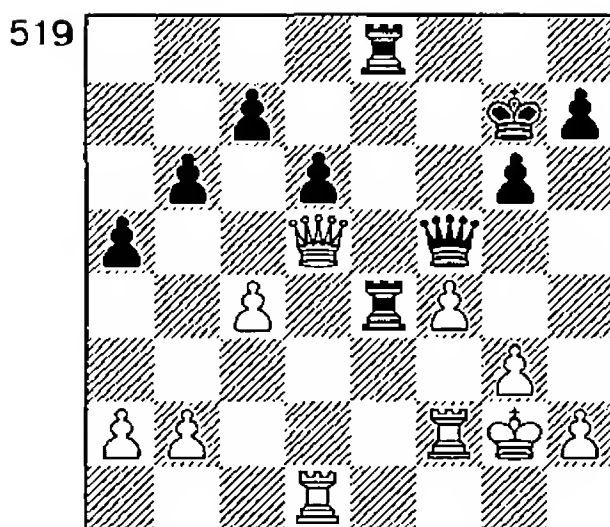
24. ♖f2 ...

Artur Yusupov suggested 24. ♔c6, but that doesn't help matters, in view of 24... ♔d4+ 25. ♗h1 ♔c5 26. ♔xc5 bxc5 27. ♖ae1 ♖ae8 28. g3 g5 29. fxg5 ♖xf1+ 30. ♖xf1 ♖e2.



24... ♖ae8
 25. ♔d5 ♔f5!
 26. ♖d1 ♖e4
 27. g3 ♖fe8
 28. ♗g2 ...

The position (see Diagram 519) has changed markedly. Black controls the e-file and has the initiative. However, White's position is still strong, which promises a long fight.



28... h5!

Black's idea is to create a pawn weakness in White's camp. It is this very weakness that proves decisive later in the game when Black approaches with his king on the threshold of the endgame.

29. b3 ♖e3
 30. ♖d4 ♗f6!

Black prepares for a queen trade. The move ...h5-h4 is now a real threat.

31. h3? ...

This is a mistake, but even the superior 31. ♖dd2 fails to save the game. Lasker indicated that Black should play 31...h4 32. ♔xf5+ gxf5 33. ♖f3 hxc3 34. hxc3 ♖e2+ 35. ♖f2 ♖xd2 36. ♖xd2 ♖e3 with a subsequent ...a5-a4-a3, ...♖el-b1-b2 and a superior ending. The variation 33. gxh4 ♖g8+ 34. ♗f1 ♖g4 is even worse.

31... h4
 32. ♔xf5 ...

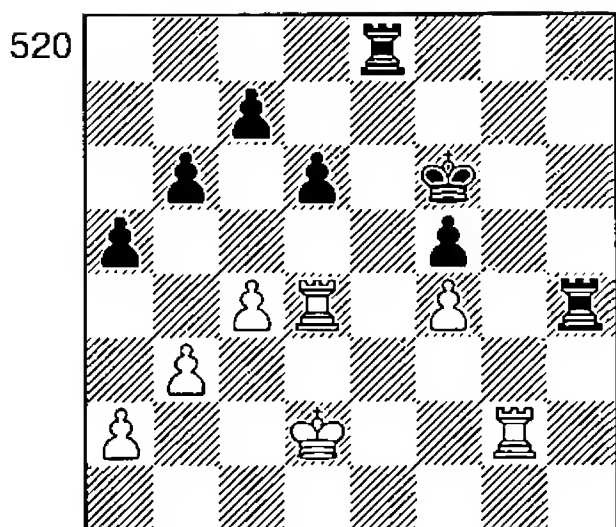
On 32. g4, Black wins by capturing the third rank with the rooks: 32... ♖xc3+ 33. ♗h2 ♔xd5 34. cxd5 ♖ee3.

32... gxf5
 33. gxh4 ...

On 33. g4, there follows 33... ♖g3+ 34. ♗h2 exf4.

33... ♖g8+
 34. ♗f1 ♖xh3
 35. ♗e2 ♖e8+

36. ♔d2 ♖xh4
37. ♖g2 ...

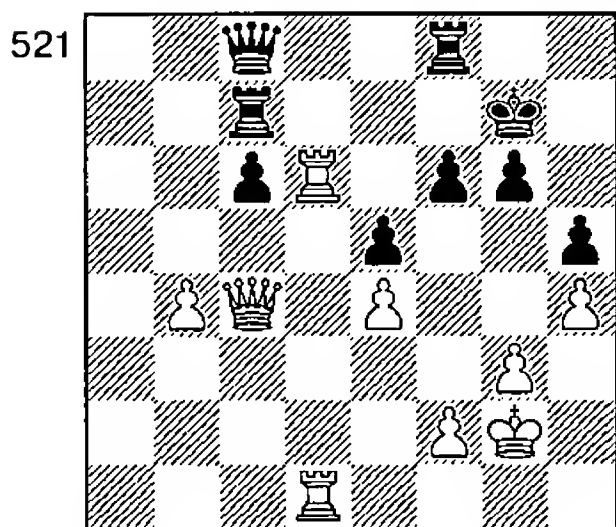


37... ♖eh8!

After one pair of rooks is exchanged, White cannot offer resistance for much longer.

38. ♔c3 ♖h3+ 39. ♖d3 ♖xd3+ 40. ♔xd3 ♖h3+ 41. ♔d4 ♖f3 42. ♔d5 ♖xf4 43. ♔c6 ♖g4 44. ♖f2 ♖g7 45. ♔d5 ♖e7 46. ♖f1 ♔g5 47. ♖g1+ ♔f4 48. a3 ♔f3 49. ♖f1+ ♔g4 50. ♖g1+ ♔h3 51. ♖f1 ♖e5+ 52. ♔c6 ♔g2 53. ♖f4 ♔g3 54. ♖f1 ♖c5+ 55. ♔b7 f4 56. ♖c1 d5 57. ♖g1+ ♔f2 58. ♖b1 d4 59. ♖c1 d3 60. b4 axb4 61. axb4 d2 62. ♖c2 ♔e3 63. bxc4 d1 ♔ 64. ♖c3+ ♔d4 65. cxb4 ♔xc3 0-1

No. 179: A Hybrid Species



Q. Evaluate the diagram position and suggest a plan for White.

This position from Simagin–Furman (Moscow 1961) is typical of major-piece endings. The position retains its middlegame character with attacks on weak points and against the enemy king, while always being on the verge of transitioning to a rook, queen, or pawn ending. Meanwhile typical endgame themes are present: few pieces are on the board, passed pawns are increasingly valuable, and the kings can sometimes participate to great effect.

The remarkable researcher Peter Romanovsky aptly named major-piece endings as the fourth stage of a chess game. This stage is defined by the activation of forces, and the fight for open files and space in which to maneuver.

In the diagram position, White's positional superiority is defined by the weakness of the c6-pawn and the exposed position of the black king. At the moment, the latter factor is not so significant, but it becomes more important as new lines are opened. Thus, White's plan is to build up pressure along the sixth rank and the a1–h8 diagonal, and then to open files on the kingside.

39. ♖e6 ♖ff7
40. ♖dd6 ♔b8
41. ♔c3 ...

The first part of the plan is complete. Now White aims to advance f2–f4 to disrupt Black's kingside.

41 ... ♖b7

Counterattacking the b4-pawn is the only one thing that Black can do. But White is not distracted by trifles, even though he still has to play carefully.

42. f4! ♖xb4
43. fxe5 ♖b2+
Black sets a trap.
44. ♖h3 ♖f2
45. exf6+ ♖h7
46. ♖d4! ...

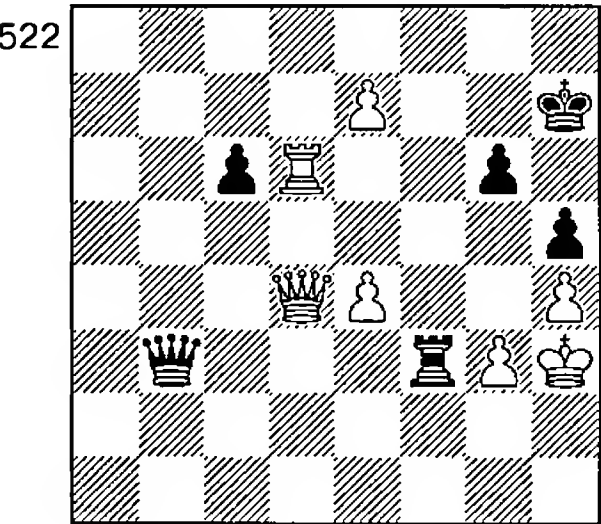
Accuracy to the end! White takes d7 under control. The hasty 46. ♖e7 would lead to an unfavorable outcome after 46... ♖c8+! 47. ♖d7 ♖xe7. Now the d7-rook will be defended and the transition into a lost rook ending for Black is inevitable.

46... ♖f3

GM Furman fights to the bitter end and makes use of all his resources. The last trap did not work – so he sets another one. By attacking the g-pawn, Black pins the white rook along the h3-b8 diagonal. It is not his fault that GM Simagin was at his best this day.

47. ♖e7 ♖xe7
48. fxe7 ♖b3

Once again Black hinders White’s plans. White cannot create a new queen because of the threat to the g3-pawn. However, White has a combination to eliminate the activity of the black pieces.



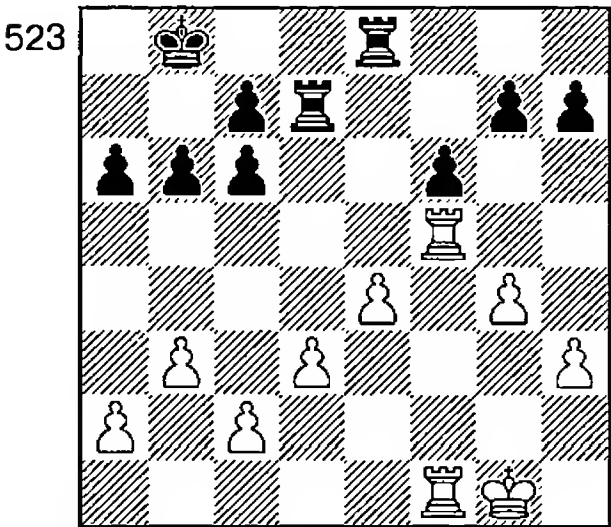
49. ♖h8+! ♖xh8

50. e8 ♖+ ♖g8

Black must either trade queens or get mated: 50... ♖g7 51. ♖xg6+ ♖f8 52. ♖d8+ ♖e7 53. ♖d6+ ♖f7 54. ♖d7+ ♖g8 55. ♖g6+ ♖f8 56. ♖g7+ ♖e8 57. ♖e7#.

51. ♖xg8+ ♖xg8 52. ♖xg6+ ♖h7 53. ♖xc6 and White won the rook ending.

No. 180: Strategy in Rook Endings



Q. Evaluate this position and suggest a plan for both sides.

In rook endings it is often difficult to convert a small material advantage. Therefore, the study of rook endings is extremely useful for developing strategic thinking, as only precise play and an accurate plan lead to success.

From standpoint, we will consider this position from **Capablanca–Janowski** (New York 1913). No doubt White is better. After g4-g5, White will have the open f-file and a passed pawn on e4. But Black has no intention to sit back and wait. He plans counterplay on the queenside by ...c6-c5, ...♖b8-b7-c6, ...b6-b5 and ...c5-c4, cracking the white pawn chain and attacking the resulting

weaknesses. Thus, White needs to restrict the enemy forces before engaging in active operations.

28. b4! ♔b7

It would be slightly better to play the king to the center.

29. ♔f2 b5

30. a4! ...

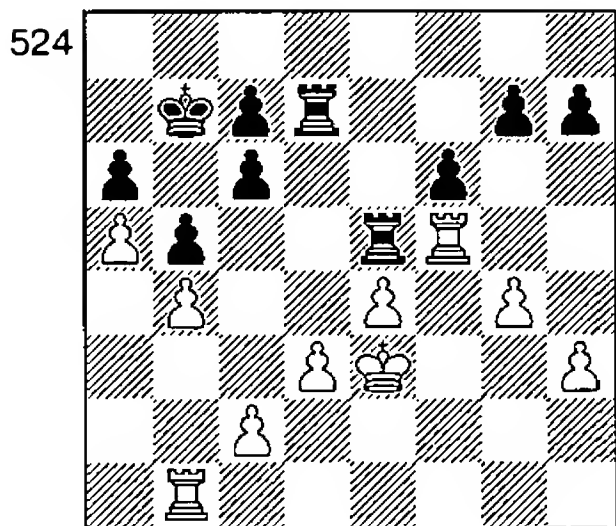
Black's previous moves prepared the opening of the a-file for the rooks after ...♔b7-b6 and ...a6-a5. Therefore, White takes measures against that plan. After 30... bxa4, Black's queenside pawns become isolated, and White will easily win his pawn back by playing a rook to the a-file.

30 ... ♖d4

31. ♖b1 ♖e5

32. ♔e3 ♖d7

33. a5! ...

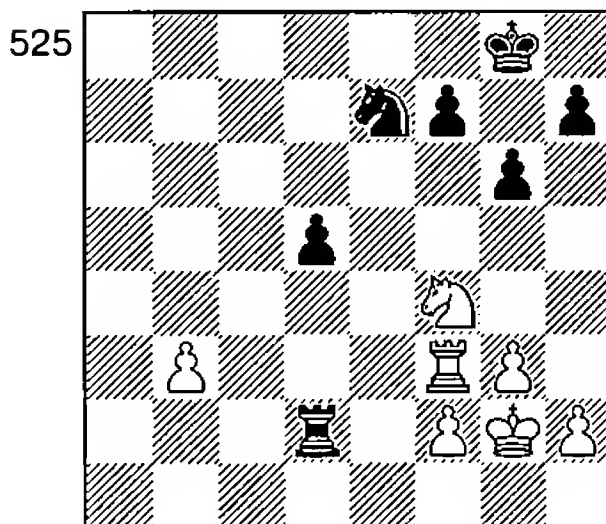


The queenside blockade deprives Black of any chance for a favorable outcome. The rest is truly a matter of technique.

33... ♖e6 34. ♖bf1 ♖de7 35. g5 fxg5 36. ♖xg5 ♖h6 37. ♖g3 ♖he6 38. h4 g6 39. ♖g5 h6 40. ♖g4 ♖g7 41. d4 ♔b8 42. ♖f8+ ♔b7 43. e5 g5 44. ♔e4 ♖ee7 45. hxg5 hxg5 46. ♖f5 ♔c8 47. ♖gxg5 ♖h7 48. ♖h5 ♔d7 49. ♖xh7 ♖xh7 50. ♖f8

♖h4+ 51. ♔d3 ♖h3+ 52. ♔d2 c5 53. bxc5 ♖a3 54. d5 1-0

No. 181: A Knight Ending



Q. Whose passed pawn is more valuable?

42. ♖e3! ...

In the game **Barcza–L.Sánchez** (Münich Olympiad 1958), the position favors White, especially if he can simplify into a knight or pawn ending. However, the rooks are still on the board, and the black rook is more active. Therefore, White maneuvers to exchange rooks or at the very least to get behind the passed b-pawn. Barcza analyzed this instructive ending in great detail.

42 ... ♔f8

It makes sense for Black to centralize his king.

43. ♖e2 ♖xe2

This exchange is forced in view of 43... ♖d4 44. ♖b2 ♖c6 45. ♔e2 ♖b4 46. ♔cl ♖d4 47. ♖d2 ♔e7 48. ♖d3 ♔d6 49. ♔a2!

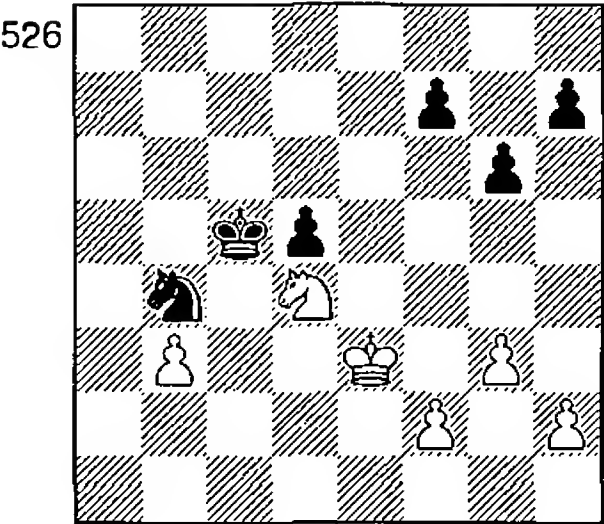
44. ♔xe2 ♖c6

45. ♔c3! ...

The move 45. ♔f4? gives nothing because of 45... ♖b4.

45 ... ♖b4
45...d4 46. ♖a2 ♖e7 47. ♔f3 favors White.

46. ♔f3 ♔e7
47. ♖b5 ♖d7
48. ♖e3 ♖c6
49. ♖d4+ ♖c5



50. h4! ...
In accordance with the principle of the two weaknesses, White creates threats on the opposite flank.

50 ... ♔d6

50...h5 is bad because White could play f2-f3 and g3-g4 to create a passed pawn on the kingside. This always offers better winning chances in knight endings.

51. g4! ♔c5
52. f4 ♔d6
53. ♖f3! ...

Forcing the weakening of Black's kingside. This is White's first achievement.

53 ... f6

Black could not play 53...h6 because of 54. h5 ♖c5 55. g5!.

54. ♖d4 ♖a6

On 54...♖c5, there follows 55. ♖e6+ and 56. ♖f8.

55. ♖c2 ♖c5

56. ♖d3 ♖c7
57. b4+ ...
The b-pawn becomes mobile; this is White's second achievement.

57 ... ♖b5

58. ♖c3 ♖c6

58...♖e6 is impossible due to 59. ♖d4+.

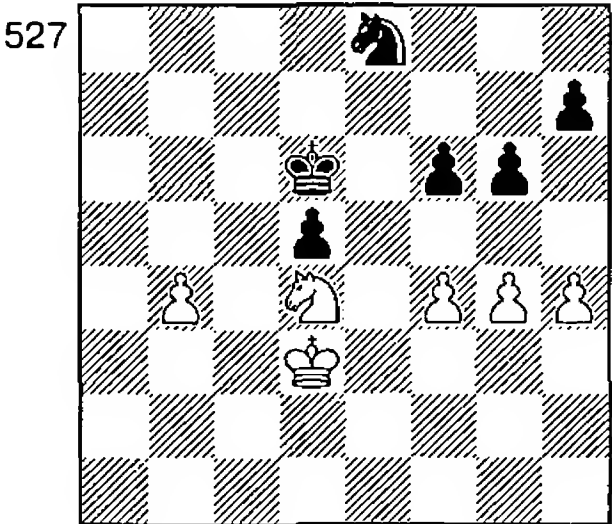
59. ♖d4+ ♖d6

60. ♖d3 ...

The pseudo-active 60. ♖b3? would lose White his advantage: 60...g5! 61. hxg5 fxg5 62. fxg5 ♖e5.

Never lose sight of the opponent's possibilities.

60 ... ♖e8



61. f5! ...

This advance further weakens Black's kingside.

61 ... gxf5

It is necessary to take the pawn or else White will exchange on g6 and eventually play h4-h5. For instance, 61...♖g7 62. fxg6 hxg6 63. ♖e2 ♖e5 64. b5 ♖d6 65. ♖f4 g5 66. h5! gxf5 67. h6 ♖e6 68. h7, and Black cannot stop the h-pawn from promoting.

62. ♖xf5+ ♖e5

63. b5 ♖c7

64. b6 ♖a6

In case of 64...♘e6 65. ♔e3, the advance of the knight pawn is threatened.

65. ♔e3 ♘c5

65...h5 66. ♔f3 would only hasten the creation of a passed h-pawn.

66. h5 ♘b7

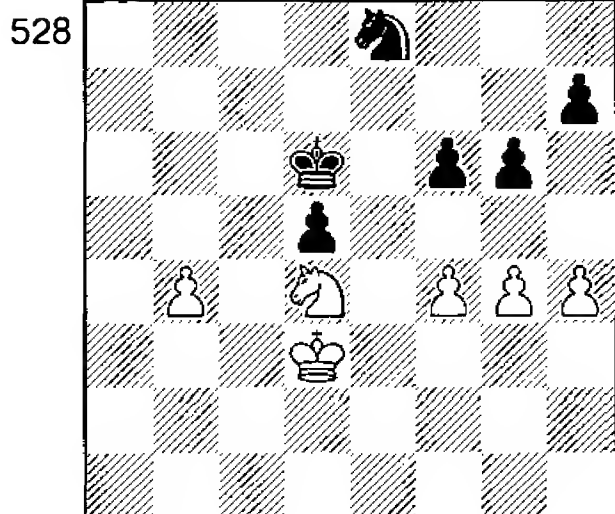
67. ♘d4 ...

67. h6 was premature because of 67... ♘d8 followed by ...♘f7.

67 ... ♔d6

68. ♘b3 ♔c6

69. ♔d4! ...



69 ... ♔d6

After 69...♘d6 there follows 70. ♘a5+ ♔xb6 71. ♔xd5, while after 69... ♘d8 White wins with 70. ♘c5.

70. ♘c1 ♘d8

71. ♘d3 ♘c6

White also wins easily after 71... ♘e6+ 72. ♔e3 ♔c6 73. ♘b4+.

72. ♔e3 ♘e7

73. ♘b4 h6

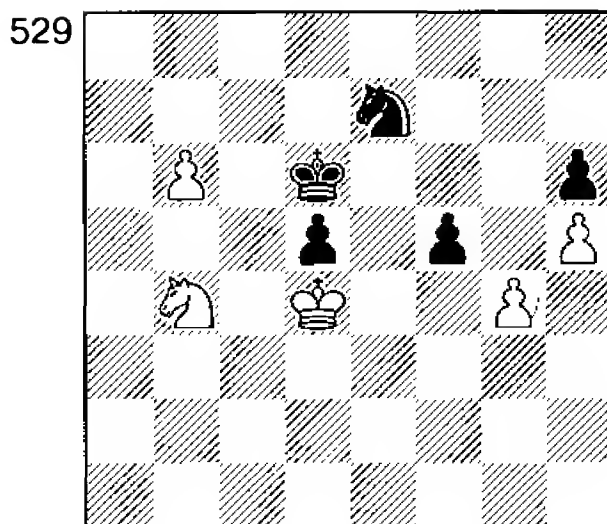
Black tries one last time to exchange on the kingside. However, the tactics favor White.

74. ♔d4 f5

(See Diagram 529)

75. g5! ...

Simple calculation shows that the pawn cannot be taken: 75...hxg5 76. b7



♔c7 77. ♘xd5 ♘xd5 78. ♔xd5 g4 79. ♔d4, and White wins easily. Such breaks are typical of pawn and minor-piece endings. Therefore the reader should memorize this example.

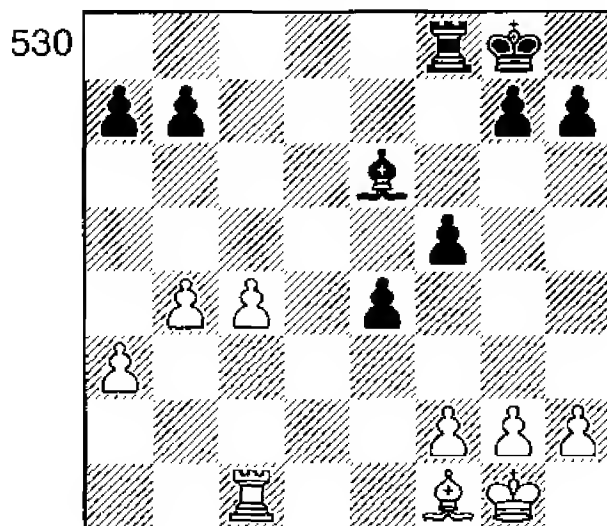
75 ... f4

76. gxh6 ♘f5+

77. ♔d3 ♘xh6

78. ♘xd5 1-0

No. 182: Competing Assets



Q. Evaluate the significance of White's queenside pawn majority.

In the game **Yates–Alekhine** (The Hague 1921), White's queenside pawn majority would seem to confer an advantage. However, Black's possession of the only open file counts for more.

25 ... ♖d8!

The dominating position of the rook, coupled with the greater activity of the black king, promises Black victory if he plays accurately.

26. g3 ♔f7!
27.c5 ♔f6!

If White could trade bishops, it would be a draw. After the preliminary moves ...g7-g5 and ...f5-f4, Black intends to use his bishop to attack the opponent's king.

28. ♕c4 ♕c8!

The point of this move is clear from the previous note.

29. a4 ...

White carries out the wrong plan. He had to play the king to the center, although his game would still be difficult.

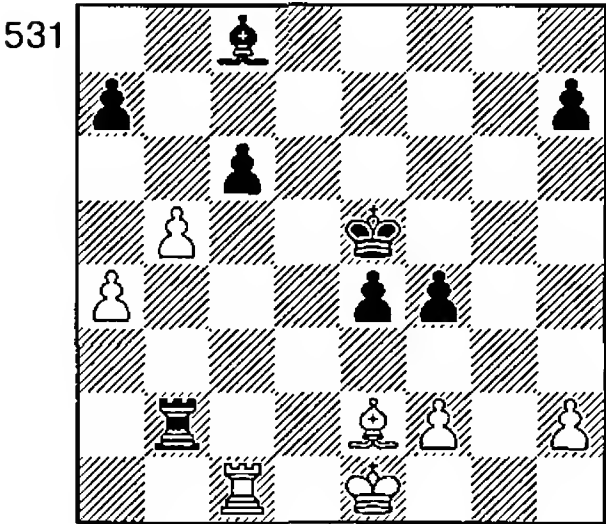
29 ... g5
30. b5 f4
31. ♖f1 ♖d2

Black conjures up an attack on the white king along the second rank.

32. ♖e1 ♖b2
33. gxf4 gxf4
34. ♕e2 ...

White defends against 34...♕g4. After 34. ♖d1 ♕g4 35. ♖d6+ ♖e7 36. ♖d4 ♕f3, White is in serious trouble.

34 ... ♔fe5
35. c6 bxc6



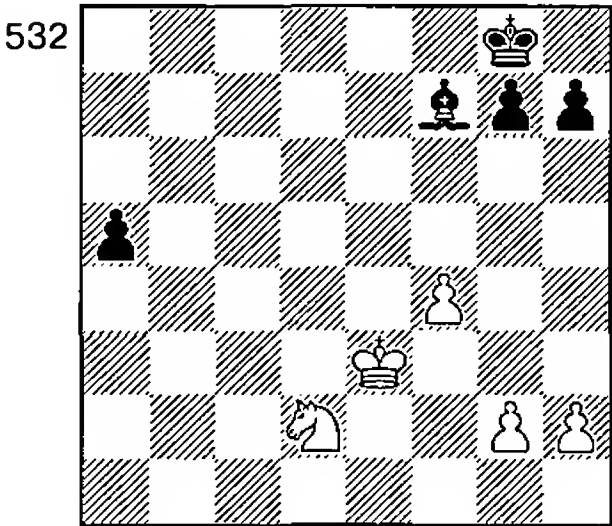
36. ♖xc6 ...

If 36. bxc6?, then 36...f3 37. ♕d1 e3 and Black wins.

36 ... ♕e6
37. ♕d1 ♖b1
38. ♖c5+ ♔d4
39. ♖c2 e3
40. fxe3 fxe3
41. ♖c6 ♕g4
42. ♖d6+ ♔c5
43. h3 ♕h5!
0-1

White resigned, as the threat to advance the e-pawn costs too much material.

No. 183: Bishop vs. Knight II



Q. Which minor piece is stronger?

This bishop-vs.-knight ending is from the game **Rellstab–Alekhine** (Salzburg 1943). In general a bishop is better than the knight when there are pawns on both sides of the board. Thus, the bishop is much stronger than the knight here.

40 ... a4
41. ♖b1 ♕a2
42. ♖a3 ♔f7
43. g3 ♖e6
44. ♔e4 ♕d5+

45. ♔d4 ♙b3

46. h4 ...

46. ♖e4 gives Black bigger problems, but after 46...♙d5+ 47. ♔d4 ♙h1! it is hard to keep the king away from f5 and g4, as on 48. g4 there follows 48...♙f3 49. g5 ♖f5.

46 ... ♙f5

47. ♖e3 ♙g4

48. ♔f2 h5

The position is ideal for Black. His passed pawn ties down the white knight and Black can now use his bishop to attack the white pawns on the kingside.

49. ♔g2 ♙d5+

50. ♖f2 ♙h3

51. ♘b5 ♙h2

52. ♘a3 ♙c6

53. ♘c4 ♙b5

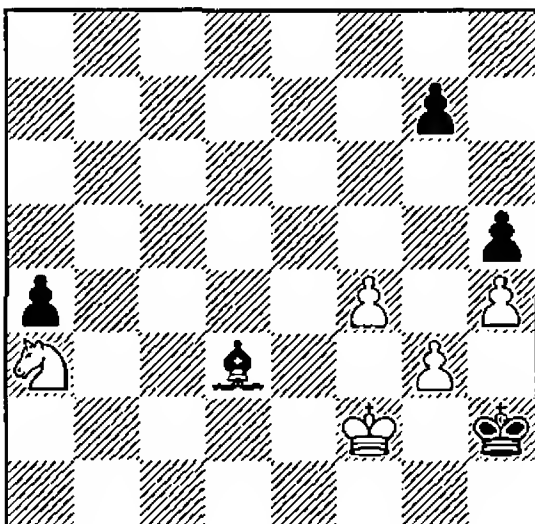
54. ♘a3 ♙a6!

54...♙d3?! 55. ♖f3 ♔g1 would be premature, as the move ...g7-g6 is necessary for the decisive break.

55. ♘c2 ♙d3

56. ♘a3 ...

533



56 ... g6!

White is in *Zugzwang*. The position of the black bishop is ideal and White is helpless against it. If White attacks it with the king, then Black will let the

bishop go in order to capture the kingside pawns, giving him a won game.

57. ♖f3 ♔g1!

58. g4 ♙h2!

Note that Alekhine spurns the opportunity to bring the king to the queenside. Here, on the kingside, the pickings are more plentiful.

59. f5! ...

White refuses to surrender without a fight; this move represents his final attempt at resistance. Otherwise, after the loss of the h4-pawn, Black would win trivially.

59 ... hxg4+

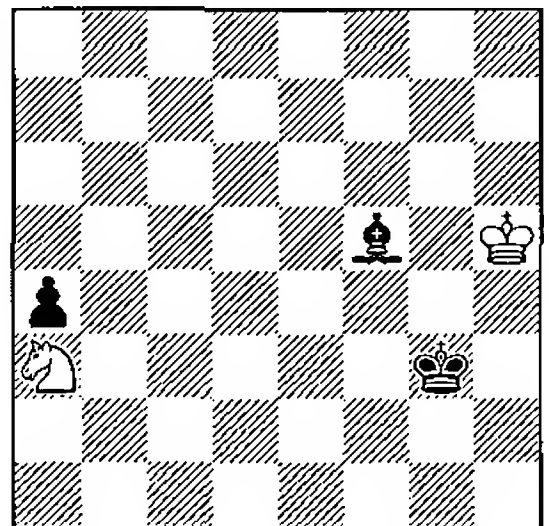
60. ♖xg4 ♙xf5+

61. ♖g5 ♙g3

62. h5 gxh5

63. ♖xh5 ...

534

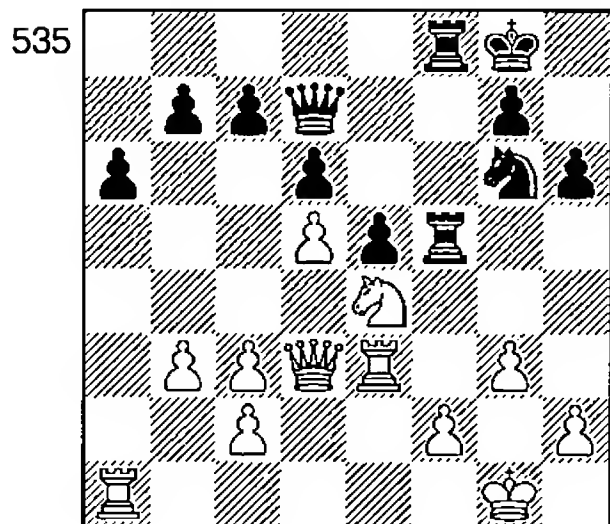


63 ... ♙d3!

Black's precisely calculated endgame play is worthy of the highest praise. If the white king could reach a1, Black couldn't win because the bishop cannot control this square. But now the black king has time to chase away the knight and keep the white king out of the corner. White has nothing left to do but test the accuracy of Black's calculation.

64. ♖g5 ♔f3
 65. ♔h4 ♕e3
 66. ♖g3 ♖d2
 67. ♖f4 ♔c3
 68. ♕e3 ♖a6
 69. ♖b1+ ♖b2
 0-1

No. 184: Accurate Calculation



Q. Find a way to improve Black's position.

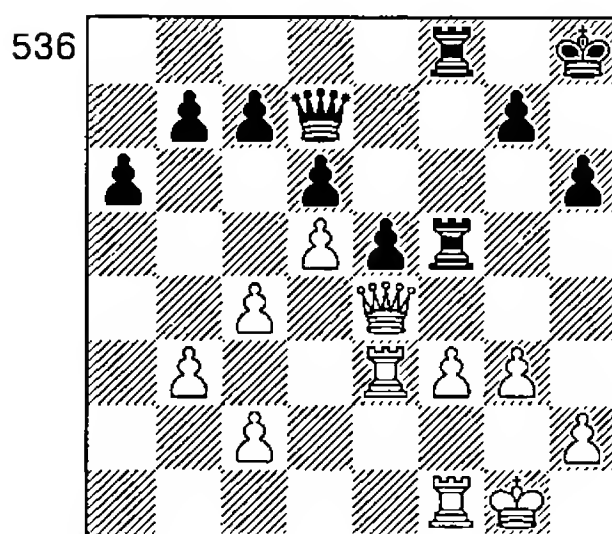
24 ... ♖e7!

As we said above, the accurate calculation of variations is necessary for skillful chess play. However, in order to calculate variations, we must be able to evaluate a position properly. Our plan should always be based on an evaluation. To evaluate means to think critically about the position at hand. This evaluation will encompass all the past experiences of the chessplayer, including the emotional highs and lows of previous victories and defeats. The sum total of these raw materials is what we call chess knowledge, and it helps a player find his bearings in any situation.

In the game **Janowski–Rubinstein** (Karlsbad 1907), Black conceives of a

plan to reroute his knight to challenge the centralized white knight. Grandmaster Yuri Razuvaev wrote of this maneuver that “for the chess of 1907, this was a real revelation.” However, as we shall see, the value of this game goes beyond this single maneuver.

25. ♖d1 ♖h8
 26. c4 ♖g8
 27. f3 ♖f6
 28. ♖f1 ♖xe4
 29. ♕xe4 ...



Q. Suggest a plan for Black.

The diagram position looks approximately equal. White is somewhat weak along the dark squares, but this doesn't look dangerous, which makes Rubinstein's next move all the more surprising.

29 ... ♕d8!
 30. ♕g4 ...

White anticipates that Black's idea was to infiltrate on the g5 square.

30 ... ♕b8!
 31. ♖g2 ♕a7!

This is the hidden point. The queen has taken three moves to travel to the edge of the board, but in so doing it has taken the important a7–g1 diagonal un-

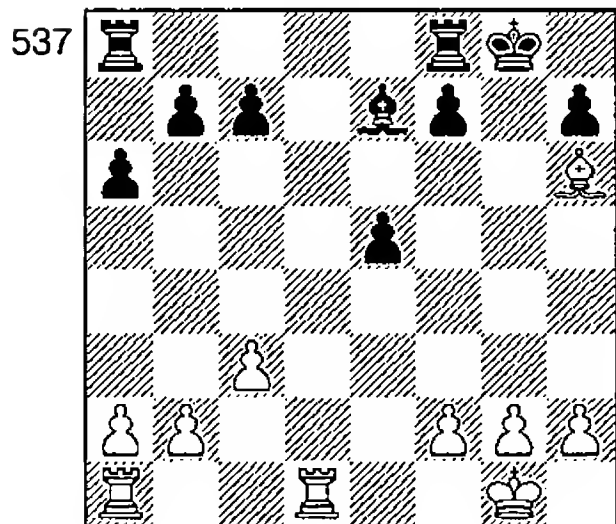
der control. Rubinstein's paradoxical idea is just as beautiful today as it was then!

32. ♖fe1	♔c5
33. ♕e4	♕b4
34. ♖1e2	♚5f6
35. ♕d3	♔g8
36. ♕c3	a5
37. ♕xb4	axb4

White enters a four-rook ending, but he fails to make the most of his chances and eventually loses.

38. c3 bxc4 39. ♖xc3 ♖a8 40. ♔h3 b6 41. ♔g4 ♖a1 42. ♖b2 ♔h7 43. b4 ♔g6 44. ♖bb3 ♖f5 45. ♖c2 ♖h1 46. f4 exf4 47. gxf4 h5+ 48. ♔g3 ♖g1+ 49. ♔f2 ♖g4 50. ♖f3 ♖gxf4 51. ♖xf4 ♖xf4+ 52. ♔e3 ♔f5 53. ♔d3 ♖f3+ 54. ♔d4 ♖b3 55. ♖f2+ ♔g6 56. ♖g2+ ♔h6 57. b5 ♖f3 58. ♔e4 ♖f6 59. ♖a2 g5 60. ♖a7 ♖f4+ 61. ♔d3 ♖f7 62. c5 dxc4 63. d6 ♖d7 64. ♖xc7 ♖xd6+ 65. ♔e4 ♖d4+ 66. ♔f5 h4 67. ♖c8 ♖f4+ 68. ♔e5 c4 69. ♖h8+ ♔g7 70. ♖c8 ♔g6 71. ♖g8+ ♔h5 72. h3 c3 73. ♖h8+ ♔g6 74. ♖g8+ ♔h6 75. ♖h8+ ♔g7 76. ♖c8 ♖f3 77. ♖c6 ♖xh3 78. ♖xb6 ♖f3 0-1

No. 185: Devising a Plan



Q. Evaluate the diagram position and suggest a plan for Black.

We have already discussed the means by which to evaluate a position, so now is the proper time to talk about devising a plan. A plan cannot be created from abstract considerations, it must be based on concrete factors. To create a plan based on the opponent's making a mistake is like building a house of cards that can be scattered by the slightest breeze. The correct evaluation of a position is one of the major factors in determining a plan. Capablanca wrote that evaluating a position ranks as one of the most difficult problems in chess, and that the main distinction between two strong players consists in their ability to properly evaluate positions and devise a correct plan of play.

Endgame positions often provide some of the best examples for learning about planning, which brings us to the diagram position from the game **Znosko-Borovsky–Alekhine** (Paris 1933). It is evident that material is equal; there is an open d-file and a half-open g-file; Black has three pawn islands compared to White's two; and the black king can likely occupy a more active position than White's.

In his book of best games, Alekhine described his plan as follows:

“The endgame position reached is by no means as easy to conduct — especially for the first player — as it appears. Black's plan — which will prove a complete success — is divided into the following parts:

“1) Exchange one pair of rooks.

“2) Bring the king to e6 where it will be protected from a frontal attack by the

e-pawn and can prevent the entry of the remaining white rook at d7.

“3) By operating with the rook on the open g-file and advancing the h-pawn, force the opening of the h-file.

“4) After this the white king — and eventually also the bishop — will be kept busy trying to prevent the intrusion of the black rook at h1 or h2.

“5) In the meantime Black, by advancing his a- and b- pawns, will sooner or later succeed in opening one file on the queenside.

“6) As, at that moment, the white king will still be on the other wing, White will not have sufficient forces to prevent the final intrusion of the black rook on his first or second rank.

“Granted that if White had, from the beginning, realized that there actually existed a danger of losing this end-game, he probably would, by extremely careful defense, have saved it. But as it happened, Black played with a definite plan, and White only with the conviction that the game must be a draw. And the result was a very instructive series of typical stratagems much more useful for inexperienced players than so-called ‘brilliances.’”

This deeply considered and active plan is based on the fundamental principle of the two weaknesses. The h-file occupied by the black rook will be the first weakness in White’s position, and the open file on the queenside will be the second.

Yet, as of now, these weaknesses exist only in Black’s mind; they still need to be created.

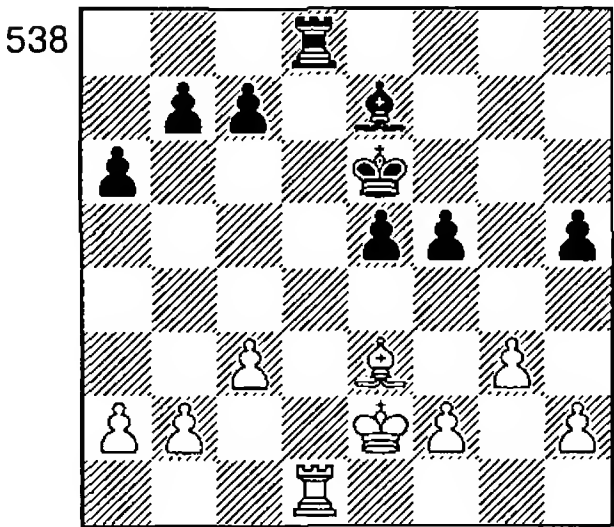
16 ... ♖f8
17. ♔f1? ...

Alekhine felt that White could have caused Black more difficulties with 17. g4, when Black could complicate matters by 17...f6 followed by ...♔f7-e6. However, 17. f4! may be even stronger. Therefore, it is important that a player be willing to alter his plan according to the opponent’s actions. I advise readers to set their plan in motion in small stages, and to accept that errors will sometimes occur as they gain greater experience. As they say, it is better to select the wrong plan than to have no plan at all.

17 ... f5!
Black does not hesitate to take advantage of the opponent’s omission.

18. ♖xd8 ♖xd8
19. g3 ...
White is forced to prevent the threatened ...f5-f4, which would lock out the white bishop.

19 ... ♔f7
20. ♗e3 h5
21. ♔e2 ♔e6
22. ♖d1 ...

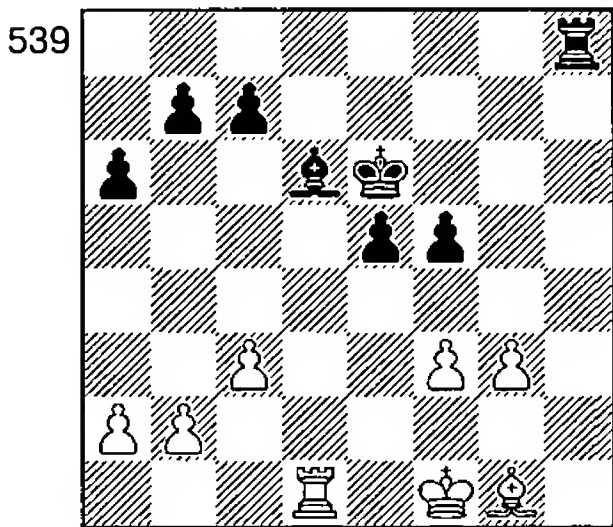


22 ... ♖g8!
Remember that Black only planned to exchange one pair of rooks; the other one is needed for the attack. 23. h4 is

bad because of 23...♖g4! followed by 24...f4.

23. f3	h4
24. ♖f2	hxg3
25. hxg3	♖h8
26. ♖g1	♙d6
27. ♔f1	...

White prepares for ...e5-e4, which he will answer by 28. fxe4 fxe4 29. ♔g2.



27 ... ♖g8!

A look at the board shows how much Black has achieved; his advantage is unquestionable. The black king is active, while the white king is tied to defending its pawns. The black rook is aggressively placed, whereas the white rook is passive. And finally, the black bishop is more active than its counterpart.

28. ♙f2	b5!
29. b3?	...

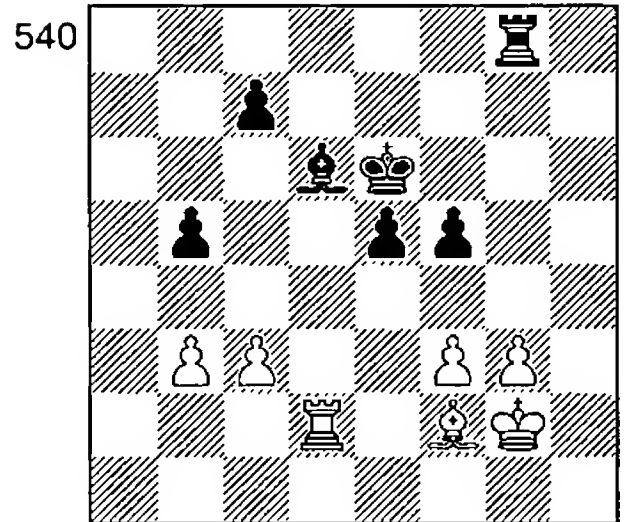
This only helps Black to open the a-file. Nevertheless, Black would have still played ...c7-c5-c4, ...a6-a5, ...b7-b5-b4.

29 ...	a5
30. ♔g2	a4
31. ♖d2	...

On 31. b4, Alekhine planned 31... ♖c8 32. ♙c5 ♖a8 followed by ...♖a6-

c6. However, the rook ending, with its greater drawing tendencies, and the exchange of White's bad bishop for Black's good, one may have been White's best chance.

31 ...	axb3
32. axb3	...



32 ... ♖a8!

Black completes his plan and targets the second weakness in White's camp – the open a-file.

33. c4	♖a3!
34. c5	...

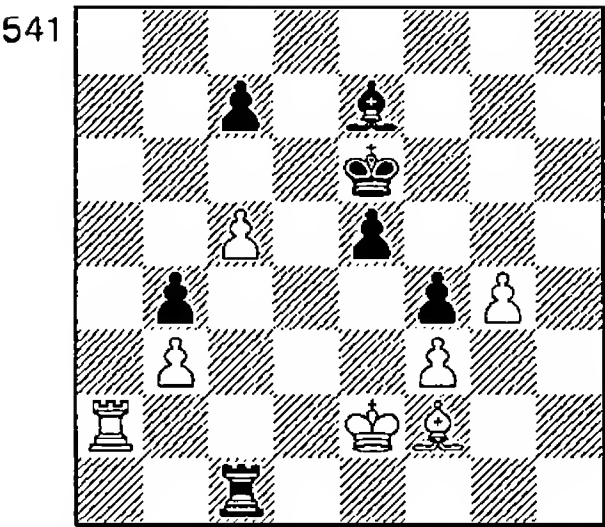
White cannot avoid losing material. 34. ♖b2 is answered by 34...bxc4 35. bxc4 ♖c4.

34 ...	♙e7
35. ♖b2	b4
36. g4	...

White's last chance is to create a passed pawn of his own.

36 ...	f4
37. ♔f1	♖a1+
38. ♔e2	♖c1
39. ♖a2	...

If the rook does not seek activity, all of White's pieces will be limited to defensive duties.



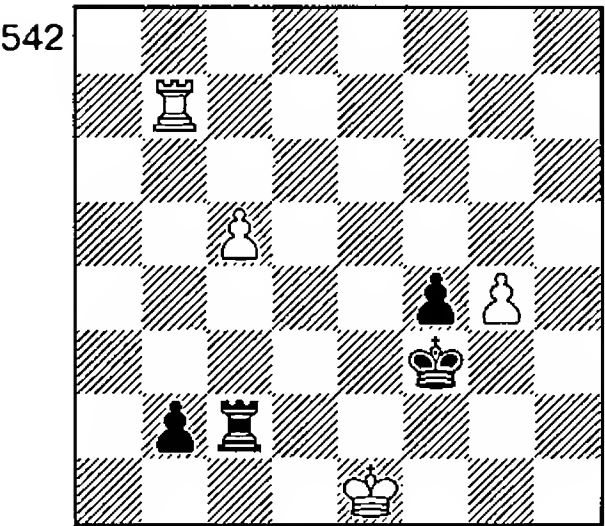
- | | |
|---------|------|
| 39 ... | ♖c3 |
| 40. ♖a7 | ♔d7 |
| 41. ♖b7 | ♖xb3 |
| 42. ♖b8 | ♖b2+ |
| 43. ♔f1 | b3 |
| 44. ♔g1 | ♔c6 |
| 45. ♔f1 | ♔d5! |

Alekhine maneuvers very carefully because he does not want to give White any drawing chances by trading bishops.

46. ♖b7 e4!

This crushing thrust shatters White's position. The black king gets access to f3 and the attack cannot be repelled.

- | | |
|-----------|-------|
| 47. fxe4+ | ♔xe4 |
| 48. ♖xc7 | ♔f3 |
| 49. ♖xe7 | ♖xf2+ |
| 50. ♔e1 | b2 |
| 51. ♖b7 | ♖c2 |



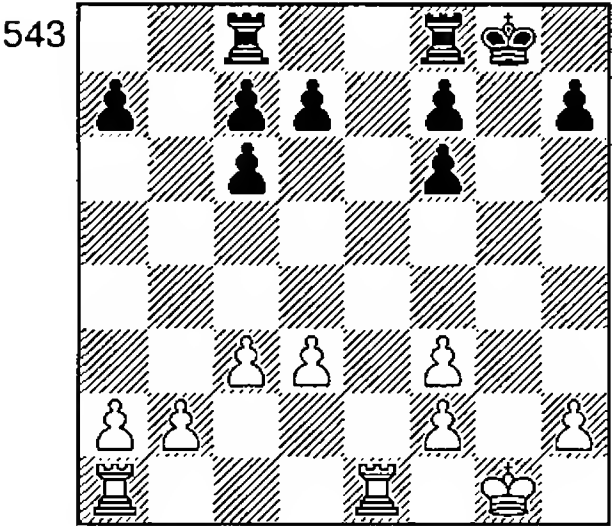
52. c6! ...

White fights to the last, but Alekhine avoids the trap 52...♖c1+? 53. ♔d2 b1♖ 54. ♖xb1 ♖xb1 55. c7!.

- | | |
|----------|------|
| 52 ... | ♔g3! |
| 53. c7 | f3 |
| 54. ♔d1 | ♖xc7 |
| 55. ♖xb2 | f2 |
| 0-1 | |

Having seen this game, I urge the reader to return to the ending in the game Lasker–Cohn that we considered earlier. Armed now with greater theoretical knowledge, he will probably view it in a different light.

No. 186:
Strategy in Four-Rook Endings



Q. Evaluate the diagram position and suggest a plan for White.

In general, four-rook endings are rare in practical play, but they occurred much more frequently in Capablanca's games than in others from the same era. In the game **Capablanca–Kupchik** (La Habana 1913), White has the better of it because he controls the open e-file, his queenside pawn structure is sounder, and he enjoys the initiative.

The proper method of play in four-rook endings is to attack with the rooks alternating from one side to the other, so that the opponent's rooks are tied to defense. It is necessary to focus on the opponent's weak points and create additional weaknesses to make his position untenable.

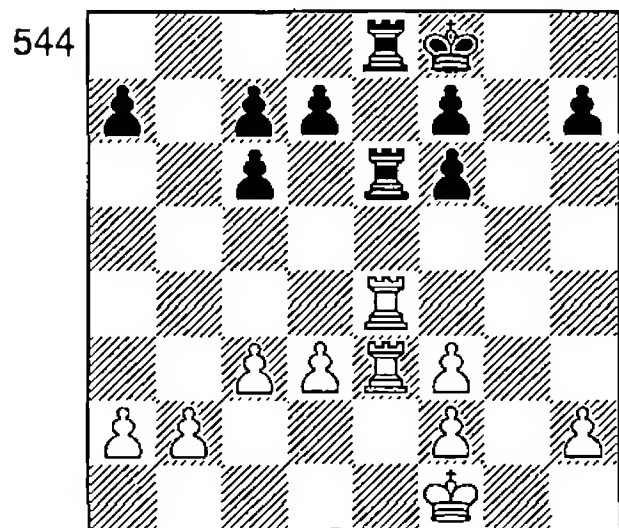
17. ♖e4 ♜fe8

This move prevents White from taking the file.

18. ♜ae1 ♜e6

19. ♜1e3 ♜ce8

20. ♔f1 ♔f8



Black has hardly anything better than edging the king closer to the center; for example, 20...d5 21. ♜g4+ followed by ♜e2 would leave Black in a difficult position; and 20...f5 21. ♜d4 ♜xe3? 22. fxe3 ♜xe3 23. ♜f2 ♜e7 24. ♜a4 wins the a-pawn.

21. ♜e2 ♔e7

22. ♜a4 ♜a8

23. ♜a5! ...

A multi-purpose move. It dissuades most of the black pawns from advancing and threatens the advance f3-f4-f5, which forces Black's reply.

23 ... d5

24. c4! ♔d6

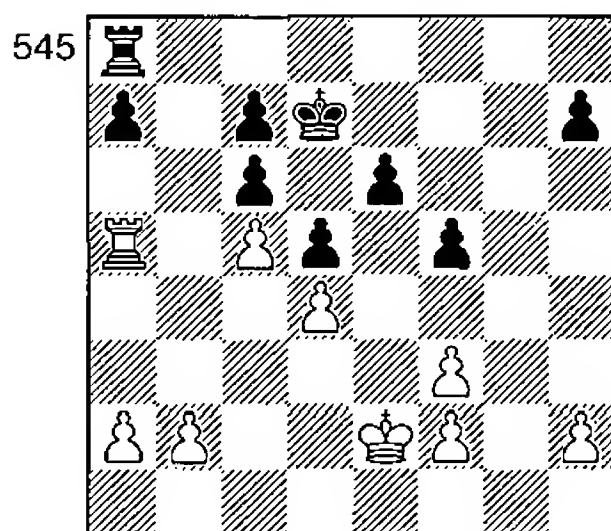
This, too, is forced. In case of 24... dxc4 all the black pawns are isolated and weak; and if 24...d4, then 25. ♜e4 ♔d6 26. b4! ♜e5 27. ♜a6 and Black's position is hopeless.

25. c5+ ♔d7

26. d4 f5

This move appears strong, as it threatens ...♜e6-h6 and compels the exchange, but 26...♜g8 offered better chances.

27. ♜xe6 fxe6



28. f4 ...

This move is imprecise. Correct was 28. ♜a6, tying Black's pieces to the defense of c6 and a7. That way Black would not get the time to rearrange his forces favorably.

28 ... ♔c8

29. ♜d2? ...

But this is just a mistake. White had to play 29. ♜a3 ♜b8 30. b3 and if 30... ♜b7, then 31. b4 ♜a8 32. ♜b3.

29 ... ♔b7?

Black in turn misses an excellent opportunity: 29...♜b8! 30. ♜c2 ♜b4 31. ♜c3 ♜c4+ 32. ♜d3 ♜b4 with a draw. If in this variation White plays 30. b3, there follows 30...♜b7 31. h3 ♜g8 32. b4 ♜g2 33. ♜e2 with sharp play.

30. ♖a3 ♜g8 31. ♜h3 ♜g7 32. ♔e2
♔a6 33. ♜h6 ♜e7 34. ♔d3 ♔b7 35.
h4 ♔c8 36. ♜h5 ♔d7 37. ♜g5 ♜f7 38.
♔c3 ♔c8 39. ♔b4 ♜f6 40. ♔a5 ♔b7
41. a4 a6 42. h5 ♜h6 43. b4 ♜f6 44. b5
axb5 45. axb5 ♜f8 46. ♜g7 ♜a8+ 47.
♔b4 cxb5 48. ♔xb5 ♜a2 49. c6+ ♔b8
50. ♜xh7 ♜b2+ 51. ♔a5 ♜a2+ 52.
♔b4 ♜xf2 53. ♜e7 ♜xf4 54. h6 ♜xd4+
55. ♔b5 ♜d1 56. h7 ♜b1+ 57. ♔c5
♜c1+ 58. ♔d4 ♜d1+ 59. ♔e5 ♜e1+
60. ♔f6 ♜h1 61. ♜e8+ ♔a7 62. h8♜
♜xh8 63. ♜xh8 ♔b6 64. ♔xe6 ♔xc6
65. ♔xf5 ♔c5 66. ♔e5 c6 67. ♜h6
♔b5 68. ♔d4 1-0

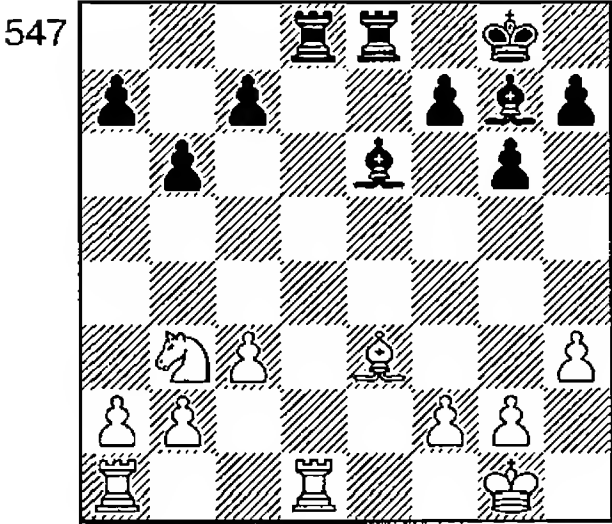
The bishops' long reach is also useful for attacking the opponent's weak pawns.

17 ... b6

Black begins constructing the pawn chain a7-b6-c5, which will take the d4 square away from the knight and blunt the e3-bishop.

18. h3 ♜e6

19. ♜fd1 ...



19 ... c5

Now Black will advance the a-pawn to squeeze the opponent even further.

20. ♜g5 ...

White is not going to wait passively. He begins by forcing Steinitz to close the dark-squared bishop's diagonal.

20 ... f6

21. ♜f4 ...

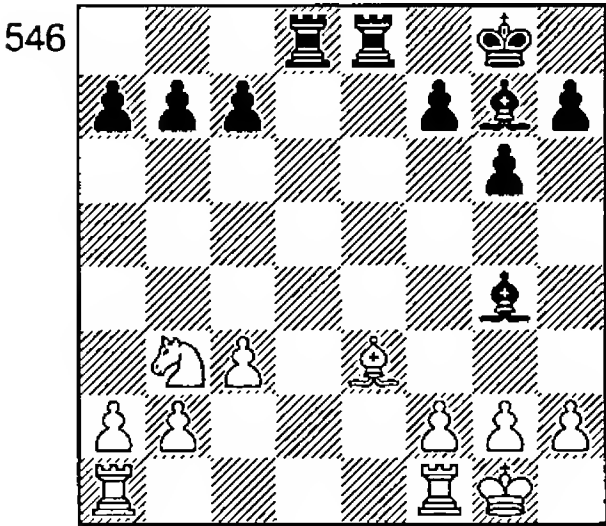
It was more challenging to return the bishop to e3 at once, than to give the opponent the possibility to attack it with tempo.

21 ... ♔f7

Black brings his king closer to the center. However, White cannot follow suit, as after 22. ♔f1 Black has 22... ♜c4+.

22. f3 ...

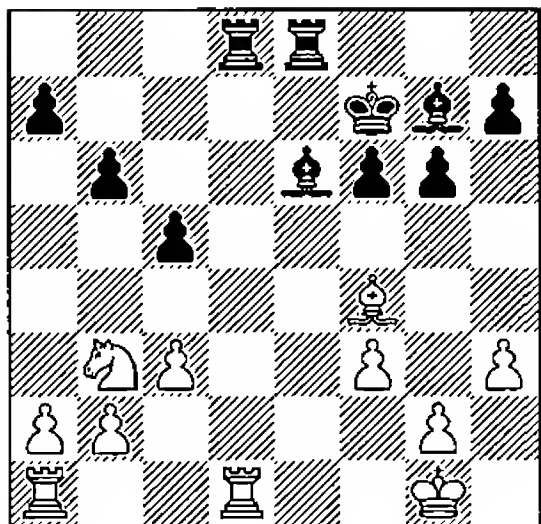
No. 187:
How to Exploit the Bishop Pair



Q. Suggest a plan for Black.

This ending is from the game **Englisch–Steinitz** (London 1883). Steinitz prescribed that in similar endings the player with the two bishops should advance his pawns to take away squares from the enemy knight. The fact that this weakens his own pawns is of no concern because the bishops can defend them from a distance.

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22 ... g5!

Steinitz aligns his kingside pawns to force White to lock in his own bishop by f3-f4 in order to suppress the threat of ...h7-h6 and ...f6-f5-f4.

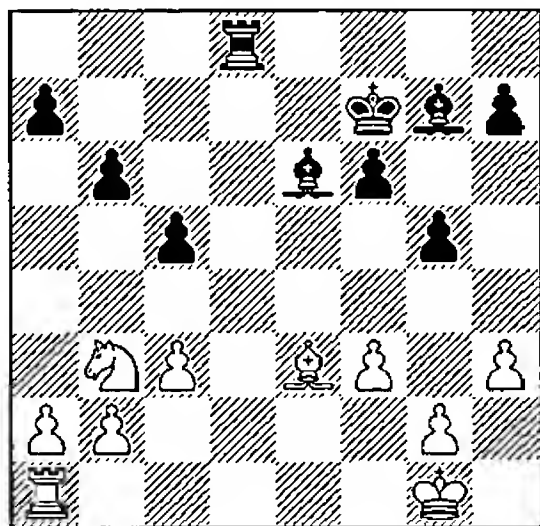
23. ♖xd8? ...

Englisch considered that it was safe to give Steinitz the open file because there were no invasion squares. But White will later have to spend much time preventing Black's rook from breaking in. Better was 23. ♗c7.

23 ... ♖xd8

24. ♗e3 ...

549



24 ... h6

Steinitz continues to build a dark-square pawn chain on the kingside, and also prepares for ...f6-f5 to activate his dark-squared bishop and deprive White of the e4 square.

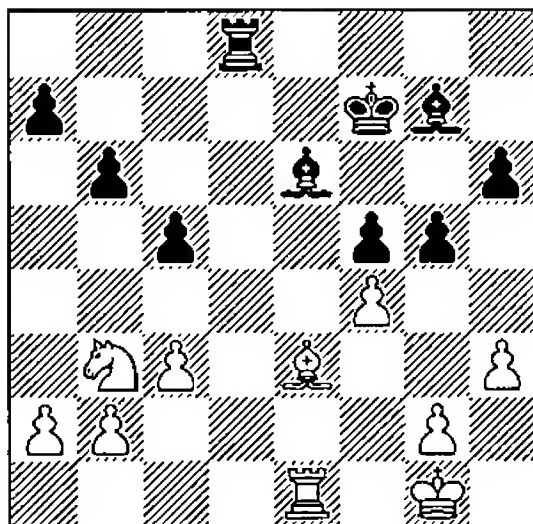
25. ♖e1

f5

26. f4

...

550



White did not want to make this move; however, he cannot allow Black to move his own pawn to f4 when the bishop would have to retreat to c1 or else Black would win the d-file by ...a7-a5-a4. It is here that the rook trade on d8 makes itself felt!

26 ...

♗f6

27. g3

a5

Steinitz plays on both flanks, not giving up the initiative for even one moment. He already threatens 28...a4 29. ♖c1 a3.

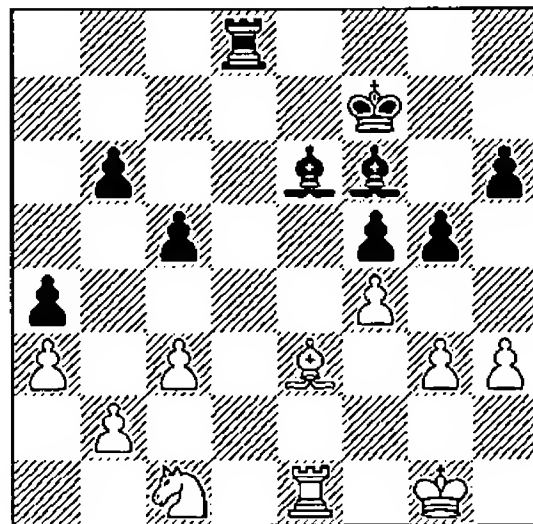
28. ♖c1

a4

29. a3

...

551



White has a poor position. This statement can be confirmed by the fact

that Steinitz has two ways to win. One is to play the rook to d5 and advance the queenside pawns; the other was played in the game.

29 ... ♖c4
30. ♔f2 gxf4!

Steinitz changes the character of the position; the reason will become clearer next move.

31. ♙xf4 ♙g5!

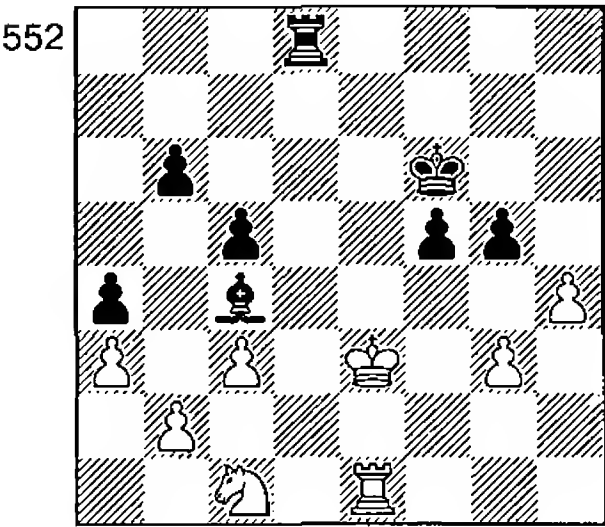
Black trades the advantage of the bishop pair to weaken d2 so that the black rook can invade.

32. ♙xg5 ...

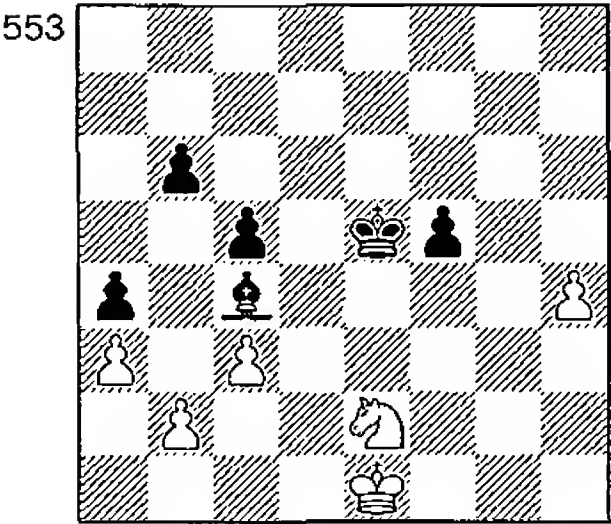
After 32. ♙e3 ♖e8+ 33. ♙f2 ♖xe1+ 34. ♙xe1 ♙xf4 35. gxf4 ♙e6, the black king invades via d5 and e4.

32 ... hxg5
33. ♙e3 ♙f6
34. h4 ...

White is in *Zugzwang*. The attempt 34. ♖h1 is met by 34...♙e5 followed by ...f5-f4+ and the rook will occupy the second rank.



34 ... gxf4
35. gxf4 ♖e8+
36. ♙f2 ♖xe1
37. ♙xe1 ♙e5
38. ♙e2 ...



38 ... ♙xe2

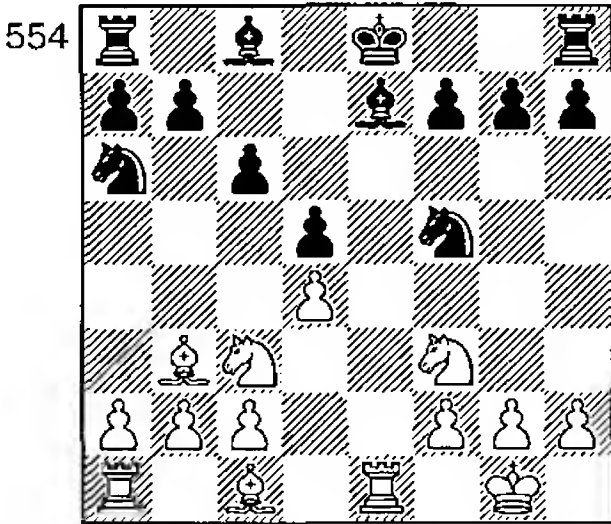
Black switches to a favorable pawn ending. White's outside passed pawn is no help because his king is so poorly placed.

39. ♙xe2 ♙f4
40. c4 ♙g4
41. ♙e3 f4+
42. ♙e4 f3
43. ♙e3 ♙g3

0-1

Steinitz skillfully limited the mobility of his opponent's pieces, captured space, and made good on his advantage accurately.

No. 188:
Exploiting Small Advantages



Q. Suggest a plan for Black.

11 ... h5!

The moves leading to this position in **Rosselli del Turco–Rubinstein** (Baden-Baden 1925) were 1. e4 e5 2. ♖c3 ♗f6 3. ♗c4 ♗xe4 4. ♔h5 ♗d6 5. ♔xe5+ ♔e7 6. ♔xe7+ ♗xe7 7. ♗b3 ♗f5 8. ♗f3 c6 9. 0-0 d5 10. ♖e1 ♗a6 11. d4. Black has accrued a number of small advantages. In particular, the b7-c6-d5 pawn chain hinders White's pieces on the queenside. Black now grabs space on the kingside and will demonstrate that his king is safe enough in the center.

12. ♗e2 ♗c7

13. c3 ...

White aims to activate the light-squared bishop.

13 ... f6

14. ♗g3 ♗xg3

15. hxg3 ...

White's damaged pawn structure is just one more small achievement for Black. However, White could hardly allow the black knight to remain unchallenged.

15 ... g5

Black cuts down the activity of White's dark-squared bishop, but leaves c2 available for the light-squared bishop. However, after 15...♗f5 there follows 16. ♗f4.

16. ♗d2 ...

This move proves unsuccessful. Better was 16. ♗c2.

16 ... ♗f5

17. ♖e3 ♗d7

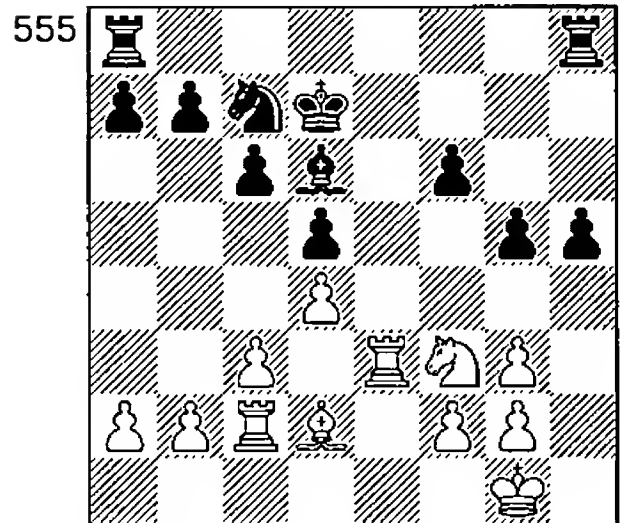
18. ♖c1 ...

This is the only way for White to do something with the ill-starred bishop.

18 ... ♗d6

19. ♗c2 ♗xc2

20. ♖xc2 ...



20 ... ♖ae8!

Black plans to trade off a pair of rooks to neutralize White's activity on the e-file and then play calmly on the kingside.

21. ♗c1 ♖e3

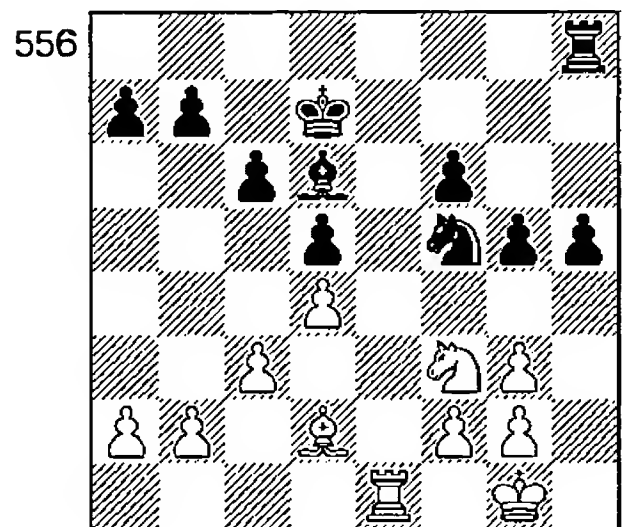
22. ♗xe3 ♗e8!

Now the other knight will occupy f5.

23. ♖e2 ♗g7

24. ♗d2 ♗f5

25. ♖e1 ...



Black's position is definitely better, but many pieces have left the board. How should Black continue with the reduced amount of material?

25 ... c5!

Rubinstein switches from the quiet strengthening of his position to an explosive break in the center that in-

creases the scope of his dark-squared bishop. True, an isolated pawn is created in his camp, but this is not dangerous because Black completely controls the d4 square. It's not a weakness if the opponent cannot take advantage of it.

26. dxc5 ♖xc5
27. ♔f1 ♜h4!

The attack on g3 proceeds.

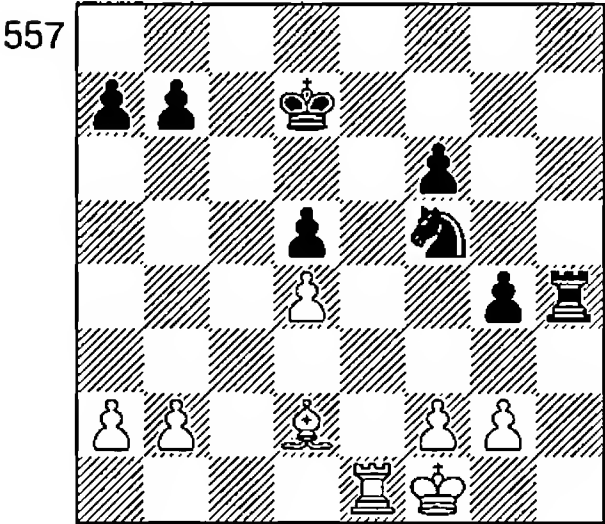
28. gxh4 ...

If 28. g4, there follows 28...♞h6 29. ♞h2 ♕d6, winning the pawn.

- 28 ... g4!
29. ♞d4 ...

Other moves lead to an even worse position.

- 29 ... ♖xd4
30. cxd4 ♜xh4

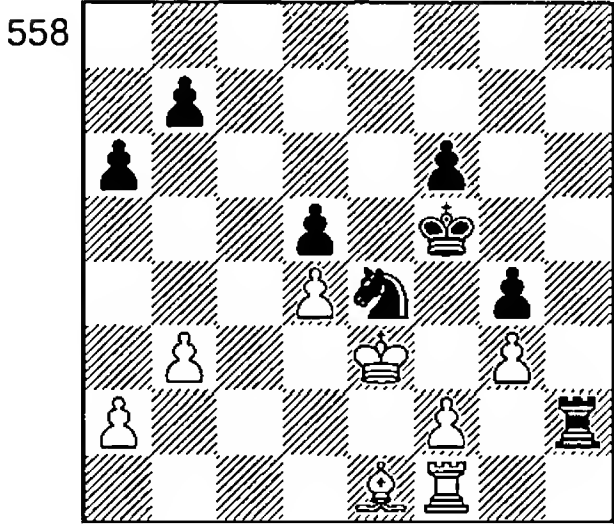


Now Rubinstein has a good knight against White's bad bishop. Moreover, the d4-pawn is vulnerable, whereas the d5-pawn is unassailable. Black plans to provoke the white g-pawn into advancing and then maneuver his knight to e4 and his king to f5.

31. ♖c3 ♜h1+
32. ♔e2 ♜h2
33. ♜g1 ♞h4!
34. g3 ...

Alekhine wrote that Rubinstein's skill at creating microscopic advantages in the endgame deserved the highest praise. His play in this game makes a very strong impression.

- 34 ... ♞f5
35. b3 ♔e6
36. ♖b2 a6
37. ♖c3 ♞d6
38. ♔e3 ♞e4
39. ♖e1 ♔f5
40. ♜f1 ...



- 40 ... ♜h8
- Black's objective is achieved.
41. ♔d3 ...

The hasty 41. f3? gxf3 42. ♜xf3+ ♔g5 would only weaken the g3-pawn and the second rank.

- 41 ... b5
42. a3 ♜h7
43. ♖a5 ♜h8

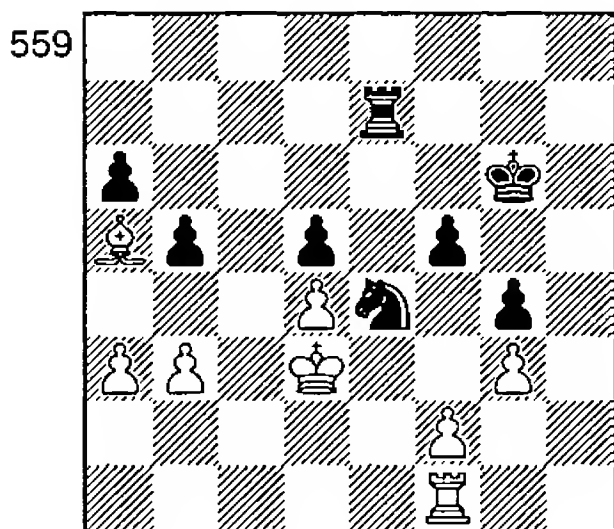
Black's play is remarkably unhurried. Rubinstein wants to break through on the kingside by advancing the f-pawn, but he bides his time in order to lower his opponent's vigilance.

44. ♖b4 ♜c8
45. ♖a5 ♞g5
46. ♖d2 ♞e4
47. ♖a5 ♜g6

48. ♖b4 f5

Note how Black masks his intentions by alternating harmless maneuvers with active moves.

49. ♖a5 ♖h8
50. ♔e3 ♖e8
51. ♔d3 ♖c8
52. ♖b4 ♖c7
53. ♖a5 ♖h7
54. ♔e3 ♖e7
55. ♔d3 ...



55 ... f4!

Black finally carries out the breakthrough.

56. gxf4 ♖h7!
57. ♖d2 ...

Nothing comes of 57. f3, as Black has 57... ♖h3 58. ♔e3 ♖xg3 59. ♖gl ♖f5+. 57... ♖xd2!

Once again, Rubinstein cashes in one advantage for another. He gives up his good knight to enter a winning rook ending in which he is even a pawn down. As Tartakover once said, it is the quality of the pawns that counts, not their quantity.

58. ♔xd2 ♖h3!
59. f3 gxf3
60. ♖f2 ...
60. ♔e3 fails to 60... f2+!.
60 ... ♔f5
61. ♔e3 ♔g4
62. b4 ...

After 62. f5 ♔xf5 63. ♖xf3+ ♖xf3 64. ♔xf3 a5, Black wins the pawn ending.

62 ... ♖h1
63. f5 ...
If 63. ♖xf3, then 63... ♖a1.
63 ... ♖e1+
64. ♔d3 ♖e4
0-1

This game was an excellent example of transforming accumulated positional advantages into a winning result.

The value of chess knowledge can be found in the fact that it opens the mind to the means for solving problems and for the creative achievement of specific goals. As the ancient Romans exclaimed, "*Finis coronat opus!*" The end crowns the work!



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